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# The Magreb Generation: Revolutionary Pan-Africanism In Postcolonial Morocco, Algeria, And Tunisia, 1956-1980

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## Abstract

This dissertation looks at the Maghreb as a Pan-African space of cultural resistance to the forces of neocolonialism and Cold War imperialism during the 1960s and '70s. Upon independence, the Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian governments, eager to emerge as world leaders, offered military and financial aid to ongoing liberation struggles in Africa, as well as in the Americas. This support motivated artists such as Black American beat-poet Ted Joans, Angolan poet-militant Mario de Andrade, and Guadeloupean filmmaker Sarah Maldoror to travel or even move to the Maghreb. There they encountered Maghrebi artists, such as Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi, and Algerian poet Jean Sénac. Together they transformed the streets and cafes of Rabat, Tunis and Algiers, into havens for militant-artists from across the world. In order to recover these spaces and moments of encounter, I have conducted interviews, scoured through artists' personal papers, and explored state and diplomatic archives. Through French, English, Portuguese, and Arabic sources, this project uncovers the lost history of collaboration at the grass-roots level between revolutionary artist militants from across Africa and the globe.

The encounters between artists in the Maghreb of the 1960s radically altered the language and reality of postcolonial alliances. From a solidarity based primarily on race and hinged upon national liberation was born a transnational movement of revolutionary poetics that used poetry, violence, and sex as tools to reclaim space from the colonial powers and the new postcolonial states. Geographical distinctions made by the academy between northern and sub-Saharan Africa have obscured the realities of these political and cultural alliances. This dissertation makes clear that it is no coincidence that this transition happened in the Maghreb. The Maghreb's interstitial position between the Middle East and Africa challenged pre-existing assumptions of racial solidarity and forced new forms of identification. This ideological shift indicates that in the 1960s and '70s, when historians have argued that intellectuals, politicians, and artists concentrated on nation building, a number of artists and militants from the postcolonial world ignored their governments' call to protect the nation-state and forged a transnational network that undermined the very foundations of these new nations.



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**THE MAGHREB GENERATION: REVOLUTIONARY PAN-AFRICANISM IN POSTCOLONIAL MOROCCO, ALGERIA AND TUNISIA**

**1956-1980**

Paraska Tolan-Szkilnik

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THE MAGREB GENERATION: REVOLUTIONARY PAN-AFRICANISM IN POSTCOLONIAL MOROCCO, ALGERIA, AND TUNISIA, 1956-1980

*For my Grandmother,*

*Sally Tolan, who taught me to love poetry*

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Oliver-O'Neil, Brice Tarleton, Elana Bauer, Drew Kotler, and Misha. You all have made the past six years so much fun and made Philadelphia feel like home. Rivka Maizlish, Alex Melman, Amanda Hoffman, Liza Behrendt, Chelsea Noriega, and Dani Bauer, you have all sustained me from afar and travelled to Philly for the important moments. Thank you to my friends in Lebanon, in particular Adnan Akkad, who helped me work through some particularly difficult Arabic sources.

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation looks at the Maghreb as a Pan-African space of cultural resistance to the forces of neocolonialism and Cold War imperialism during the 1960s and '70s. Upon independence, the Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian governments, eager to emerge as world leaders, offered military and financial aid to ongoing liberation struggles in Africa, as well as in the Americas. This support motivated artists such as Black American beat-poet Ted Joans, Angolan poet-militant Mario de Andrade, and Guadeloupean filmmaker Sarah Maldoror to travel or even move to the Maghreb. There they encountered Maghrebi artists, such as Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi, and Algerian poet Jean Sénac. Together they transformed the streets and cafes of Rabat, Tunis and Algiers, into havens for militant-artists from across the world. In order to recover these spaces and moments of encounter, I have conducted interviews, scoured through artists' personal papers, and explored state and diplomatic archives. Through French, English, Portuguese, and Arabic sources, this project uncovers the lost history of collaboration at the grass-roots level between revolutionary artist militants from across Africa and the globe.

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## Introduction. The Maghreb Generation and the Creation of Postcolonial Pan-Africanism

*« Et maintenant nous chanterons l'amour*
*Car il n'y a pas de Révolution sans Amour »* [1]

*"And now we will sing love*
*For there is no Revolution without Love"*

- *Jean Sénac, 1963*

When Algerian poet Jean Sénac wrote these words in January 1963 in Algiers, it had been six months since the liberation forces had marched into the city on July 3, 1962, and proclaimed the nation's independence. Sénac's poem, "Citizens of Beauty," reveals a man still basking in the glow of a new spring. It ends somewhat ominously, however, warning that Algeria's leaders were squandering away the country's future, "at the cafés' terraces our swollen monkeys/nibble at the future in between their peanuts."[2] Despite the initial optimism, Sénac's poem cautioned the Algerian people to protect the Revolution. In 1963 Sénac, like many of his fellow revolutionary-poets from independent countries across Africa, was wary of declaring victory too soon. To these young men and women, the political transition of power from European territorial control to independence was not enough; the Revolution would have to continue after the revolution. As Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi wrote in 1976 to his Angolan friend, poet Mario de Andrade, "the fight for liberation is not limited to territory, it is the fight for men and women, it is the

[1] Jean Sénac, "Citoyens de Beauté," *Citoyens de Beauté: Poèmes* (Charlieu: La Bartavelle, 1997), p. 9.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 15. Comparing turncoat African leaders to monkeys was common amongst the artists-militants of this period. These leaders were accused of imitating [*singer* in French] European leaders, mere copycats who preferred the comforts of collaboration to the unknowns of non-alignment. Abdellatif Laâbi, Moroccan poet and central narrator of the second chapter, wrote a poem entitled "Les Singes électroniques," comparing postcolonial African leaders to wind-up toys. [Abdellatif Laâbi, "Les Singes électroniques," *Souffles*, 16-17, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 40].

fight to throw, in the same trash-can of history, colonialism and racism, and it is based in the power of the people."[3]

This dissertation tells the stories of a network of militant-artists that emerged in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, in the 1960s and 1970s—a network I call the Maghreb Generation. The Maghreb Generation was composed of men and women from Sub-Saharan Africa, from the Black Diaspora in the Americas, and politically radical individuals from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. As a group, the Maghreb Generation rejected their postcolonial states' easy appeals to fixed national solidarities and built instead a worldwide network of militant-artists who decreed poetry, film, guerilla violence, and direct political action the crucial weapons in the struggle for the postcolonial future.[4] The Maghreb Generation pushed beyond the racially-determined alliances of the previous generation of *négritude*, Pan-Arab, and Pan-African intellectuals, and discursively racialized resistance. In so doing, its members radically altered the reality of postcolonial alliances, forging relationships and political networks, which, under the guise of culture, threatened the authority of the postcolonial African states and the Cold War order. When the Americans, the Soviets, and the Maghrebi states finally understood this threat, they squashed the network, by arresting, imprisoning, or even killings its leaders.

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[3] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Lettre à un ami angolais," *Sous le Bâillon, Le Poème, Écrits de prison, 1972-1980* (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1981), p. 141.

[4] I have chosen to capitalize Black, as I would capitalize the word American or African. I made this choice because Black men and women imagined themselves as part of a community that superseded the nation but that had similar attributes, such as common culture, a joint set of values, and an analogous vision for the postcolonial future. Furthermore, many journalists and academics have called for capitalizing the word Black when it refers to people rather than simply to the color. See for instance: Lori L. Tharps, "The Case for Black with a Capital B," *The New York Times,* November 18th, 2014.

My work contributes to a recent historiographical trend that highlights the political vanguard of the postcolonial period in order to bring to the fore the voices and lives of these thinkers and militants.[5] Still, little scholarly attention is afforded to the thousands of intellectuals, militants, and artists who struggled to save the postcolonial period from state control and censorship. I uncover the lives of artist-militants who lived in the immediate shadow of figures such as Patrice Lumumba, Malcolm X, and Frantz Fanon. By offering fresh insights into the lives and environments of such figures as Black American beat poet Ted Joans, Mario de Andrade, and Tunisian film scholar Tahar Cheriaa, I expand the canon of voices who led the charge against neo-colonialism and called for a third way between Soviet austerity and the unbridled capitalism of the West.

**Longue-Durée Decolonization**

By January 1963 all three Maghrebi countries, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, were independent.[6] King Mohammed V of Morocco had negotiated Moroccan independence from France in March 1956, after several years of exile in Corsica and Madagascar.[7] After twenty years in French prisons, Habib Bourguiba achieved

[5] In recent years, historical monographs, popular histories, and graphic novels on such characters as Amilcar Cabral and Che Guevara, have multiplied. Such titles include but are not limited to: Roberto Beneduce and Nigel C. Gibson, *Frantz Fanon, Psychiatry and Politics* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017); Jean Khalfa and Robert J.C. Young (eds.), *Frantz Fanon: Alienation and Freedom* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); Firoze Manji and Bill Fletcher, *Claim no Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral* (Montreal: Daraja Press, 2013); Peter Karibe Mendy, *Amilcar Cabral: A Nationalist and Pan-Africanist Revolutionary* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019); Reiland Rakaba, *Concepts of Cabralism: Amilcar Cabral and Africana Critical Theory* (London: Lexington books, 2015); Jon Lee Anderson and Jose Hernandez, *Che: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018); Andrew Helfer and Randy DeBurke, *Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

[6] The Maghreb refers to the western part of North Africa. It includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya. This project however focuses on the former French colonies of the Maghreb. The Maghrebi population includes but is not limited to people of Arab, Berber, and Sub-Saharan African descent.

[7] See Pierre Vermeren, *Histoire du Maroc depuis l'indépendance* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006).

independence for Tunisia in March 1956, and became the first president of independent Tunisia.[8] Finally, on March 18th 1962, the French government and the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), signed the Evian Accords, bringing an eight-year-long struggle for independence to an end.[9]

Upon independence, the Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian governments, intent on emerging as world leaders and unable to leverage power in the Middle East, turned South and, in an attempt to dominate the Pan-African field, offered military and financial aid to ongoing liberation struggles throughout Africa and the Americas. This official support of Black liberation struggles inspired militant-artists to travel and move to the Maghreb. The Maghreb became a haven for militant-artists; in Rabat, Tunis and Algiers they ate, slept, made friends, wrote poetry, drank, smoked, had sex, in short, they lived. Eager to escape white supremacy in the Americas, Black Americans and Caribbeans, such as beat poet Ted Joans or Haitian poet René Depestre, moved to Tangiers and Algiers, forsaking the European metropoles that had so enthralled their forefathers, such as James Baldwin and Richard Wright.[10] Aided by the Moroccan government, Mario de Andrade and his Luso-African comrades made Rabat their home base, attracting young freedom fighters from Angola and Mozambique, and training them in military camps across Morocco.[11] Starting in 1966, Tunis drew a host of young African filmmakers for the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage (JCC), distributing prizes to Sarah Maldoror for her movie denouncing Portuguese colonialism, *Sambizanga* (1972) and to

[8] See Larbi Chouikha and Eric Gobe, *Histoire de la Tunisie depuis l'indépendance* (Paris: La Découverte, 2015).
[9] See Sylvie Thénault*, Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005); Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1977); Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (1954-1962) (Paris: La Découverte, 1992).
[10] See chapter 4.
[11] See chapter 1.

Mauritanian Med Hondo for his 1974 film decrying the difficult labor conditions of African immigrants in France, *Les Bicots-Nègres vos voisins*.[12] In July 1969, the Algerian government threw a Pan-African fête – the Panafrican Festival of Algiers (PANAF) – in the streets of the capital, inviting Nina Simone and Miriam Makeba to sing to the glory of postcolonial Algeria and Africa.[13]

While many of these artists were originally enthusiastic supporters of their young nations' first leaders, they quickly came to feel that these politicians were usurping the Revolution. Like Sénac who warned against the "swollen monkeys nibbling" away at their future, the Maghrebi and foreign artists were not duped by their governments' supposed commitment to artistic freedom. They rapidly realized that political independence was not enough, that decolonization was a *longue-durée* enterprise and that the nation-state was ill fitted to lead the charge.[14] And so, using government funds when possible, but rejecting political alliances that went against their ideals, these artists made the Maghreb a bastion for the struggle against neocolonialism and the tyranny of a state over its people. Parallel to the Maghrebi states' various Pan-African projects (such as the Pan-African Festival of Algiers (PANAF) or the Journées Cinématographiques de

[12] See chapter 5.

[13] See chapter 3. The recent fascination with the Panafrican Festival of Algiers in popular culture is quite striking. A few years ago, while writing my master's thesis, it was almost impossible to find a copy of William Klein's film *PANAF 1969*. Now it is available online, through Amazon, and is regularly screened in film festivals around Paris. The number of blogs that mention the festival, have excerpts of interviews with participants, and unearth photos from the various shows and displays is almost overwhelming. In May 2016, Sarah Frioux-Salgas curator of the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, organized an exhibit on the First World Festival of Negro Arts of Dakar in 1966 which included a room dedicated entirely to the Algiers festival.

[14] Before historian Frederick Cooper identified decolonization not as a moment but as a process, militant-artists from the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa extended the work of decolonization well beyond the moment of national independence. They turned anger and weapons, forged in the fight against colonial powers, against the neo-colonial European states and against their own governments when these exhibited authoritarian tendencies. Fred Cooper poses this question: "What ties between the 'colonial' and the 'post'? Not an event, not a moment, but a process." [Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 4].

Carthage), Sénac, Laâbi, Andrade, Depestre, Joans and their peers, in an attempt to evade the prying eyes of the state, created alternative spaces of encounter. They moved away from governmental institutions, and politicized cultural, and personal, spaces—they met in bars, cafés, in each other's' bedrooms, within the pages of self-published journals, like the Moroccan literary journal *Souffles*, on the airwaves of radio shows, like Sénac's *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, and at Tunisian movie theaters.

**From Racial Solidarity to an Ideology of Relentless Revolutionary Poetics**

The encounters in North Africa between Black and Maghrebi artists challenged the foundations on which many believed Pan-African solidarities were based. Before travelling to the Maghreb, poets such as Andrade, Depestre, and Joans articulated their ideals along the lines of racial and national solidarity. They were inspired by the political Pan-Africanism of their forefathers who had fought to free African people through anti-colonial struggles and a series of Pan-African congresses.[15] They were stirred by the

[15] The canonical story of Pan-Africanism starts in 1900 with the First Pan-African Congress, ends in the early 1960s with African independences and includes only a handful of characters, mostly British and American bourgeois Black men. Such histories as Adekunkle Ajala's *Pan-Africanism: Evolution, Progress and Prospects,* Ronald Walters' *Pan-Africanism in the African Diaspora*, or Olisanwuche Esedebe's *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement*, albeit valuable in their exploration of Black anti-colonial activity in the first half of the twentieth century, have restricted the field of inquiry and participated in the problematic segmentation of African and African Diaspora history. [Adekunle Ajala, *Pan-Africanism: Evolution, Progress and Prospects*, (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1973); Olisanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement 1776-1963*, (Washington: Howard University Press, 1982); Imanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa*, (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1968); Ronald W. Walters, *Pan-Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993)]. Scholarship on Pan-Africanism has largely ignored intellectual and political movements striving for an African homeland (whether imaginary or institutional) prior to 1880 or post-1960. A few contemporary scholars are now reconstructing early forms of Pan-Africanism and reframing the Pan-Africanist narrative into a wider chronology. One example of current scholarship re-examining the Pan-African saga is Toyin Falola and Kwame Essien's edited volume, published in 2014, *Pan-Africanism and the Politics of African Citizenship and Identity*. Looking at reverse migrations, this collection of essays demonstrates how these migratory patterns "epitomize the power of alliances, the significance of unity, the influence of the memory of a homeland, contradictions, and contestation about the idea of 'return,' and the enduring legacy of Pan-

poetry of the *négritude* movement; they read Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Léon Damas, and throughout the 1950s, they searched for their own blackness.[16] Often this involved the pursuit of a nationally-specific *négritude,* an Angolan, Haitian, or American Black identity. But as the 1950s became the 1960s, the leaders of the new Black nations became increasingly autocratic. The *négritude*-rendered-policy of Senghor in Senegal and Pap Doc Duvalier in Haiti became repulsive to these militant-poets. As Depestre, Joans, and Andrade travelled in the Maghreb, they met Maghrebi poets, such as Laâbi and Sénac, who were equally disenchanted with the new leaders of the postcolonial world. From Tangiers, Algiers, Rabat, and Tunis, they started declaring, in quasi-unison, that rigid racial solidarity was obsolete. In 1966, Depestre published an essay in *Souffles*, arguing that "separated from the historical context of the revolution in the Third-World, *négritude* became an unacceptable "black Zionism" which kept the Black people away from their duty to do the revolution."[17] Joans, who by 1966 had been living in the Maghreb for six years, wrote to his friend, poet André Breton, that he would not go to Dakar for what he called "*Senghor's merde noire*" [Senghor's Black shit], otherwise known as the First World Festival of Negro Arts, because he did not want to participate in an event where artists and poets would be "held up (financially)…by Senghor's black

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Africanism or lack thereof." [Toyin Falola, and Kwame Essien, (eds.), *Pan-Africanism, and the Politics of African Citizenship and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 2].

[16] In 1953, Mário de Andrade and his São Toman friend Francisco Tenreiro published the *cuaderno* "Poesía Negra de Expressão Portuguesa," with the intention of publicizing a specifically Luso-African form of *négritude*. See Mario de Andrade, "Poesia Negra de Expresso Portuguesa (Cuadernos de Poesia)," May 1953, Arquivo Mario Pinto de Andrade, Fundaçao Mario Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04354.006.002#!11.

[17] René Depestre, "L'intellectuel révolutionnaire et ses responsabilités envers le Tiers-Monde," *Souffles*, Number 9, (First Trimester 1968), p. 45.

bourgeoisie gangsters assisted by the U.S.A fat-black-pussy-cat officials."[18] He boycotted Dakar in his "own sweet way," he continued, by "crossing the Sahara" to Oran.[19]

The Maghreb thus reshaped postcolonial cultural discourse throughout the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Moving away from the racial solidarity extolled by many of their nationalist forefathers, these poets followed in the footsteps of their intellectual mentor, Frantz Fanon, and argued for the creation of a new ideology of continued revolution—one that was transnational, trans-racial and defied the new nation-states. It is no coincidence that this turnover happened in the Maghreb. The Maghreb's interstitial position between the Middle East and Africa challenged pre-existing assumptions of racial solidarity and forced new forms of identification.

This is not to say that the language of race was absent from the discourse of postcolonial Pan-Africanism, after all members of the Maghreb Generation were still careful to distinguish themselves from White Europeans and Americans. Eager not to be confused with the White poets, beatniks, hippies, or "hairy marijuana dealers" of Paris and Woodstock, these poets made clear that they were not mere "marchers of war and peace."[20] Their intention was not to beat the "tam-tams of victory,"[21] to loll in the comforts of folklore and exoticism, but rather to "dynamite the rotten halls of the old humanisms."[22] In order to do that, these militant-poets "attempted to push beyond the color curtain," and in so doing they discursively colored resistant people.[23] All colonized

[18] Ted Joans, Letter to André Breton, May 5th 1966, Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris, France.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Abdellatif Laâbi, « Lisez 'Le Petit Marocain' », *Souffles,* Number 2, (Second Trimester, 1966), p. 7. See also: Ted Joans, "The Negro and the Hippies," Box 16:33, BANC MSS 99/244 z, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, CA, USA.
[21] Mario de Andrade, "Culture et Lutte Armée," *Souffles*, Number 9, (First Trimester 1968), p. 54.
[22] Abdellatif Laâbi, « Prologue, » *Souffles*, Number 1, (First Trimester 1966), p. 6.
[23] Anne Garland Mahler, *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism, and Transnational Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Dukes University Press, 2018), p. 13.

and formerly-colonized people, all those who resisted neocolonialism and imperialism, became Black by virtue of their opposition. The Pan-African community, hence, extended well beyond the boundaries of the continent, or even of the Diaspora, to all those who sought a community, a Third Way between American capitalism and Soviet socialism. Pan-Africanism extended to include the entire Third World—militants from across the Third World joined a network that spanned from Cuba to Vietnam, through California and Goa, but the beating heart of that network was the African continent, and the Maghreb in particular. I call this network the Maghreb Generation.

**The Masculinism of Relentless Revolutionaries**

Through their poetry and film, the Maghreb Generation romanticized paramilitary action, constructing the archetype of the Third-World revolutionary as a Black male figure with pen in hand and gun at the shoulder.[24] The political spaces the Maghreb Generation labored so hard to create were open to dissent, but closed, for the most part, to women. *Souffles,* the PANAF, and the JCC, were men's worlds in which women were, at best, background characters. Women performed the secretarial tasks in *Souffles*, typing and editing the articles, like Jocelyne Laâbi, Abdellatif's wife. They travelled alongside

[24] As scholar Tsitsi Jaji notes in her article "Bingo Magazine in the Age of Pan-African Festivals: A Feminist Archive of Global Black Consciousness?" festivals like the Panafrican Festival of Algiers and the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage "necessarily privileged artists and cultural workers with the means and/or support for travel from governmental, United Nations, or nongovernmental organizations and were often dominated by male participants and planners." Thus, explains Jaji, the festival history of Pan-Africanism and Third-Worldism is subject to much of the same criticism scholars have leveled against scholars of globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism. "A history of global black thought that privileges such events will inevitably tend to gloss over the ways gender, class, education level, and plain old cultural capital shut out certain participants and thus obscure many local iterations of black internationalist impulses," continues Jaji, "it will also emphasize the role of the state and its male-dominated structures of governance and cultural planning." [Tstsi Jaji, "Bingo Magazine in the Age of Pan-African Festivals: A Feminist Archive of Global Black Consciousness?" *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, Number 42-43, (November 2018), pp. 110-123, p. 113].

their husbands, like Sarah Maldoror, Mario de Andrade's wife, moving children halfway across the world, making new homes for their families in unfamiliar lands. They gave birth in extreme conditions, like Kathleen Cleaver who had to be driven to a hospital in the outskirts of Algiers in the middle of the night during the PANAF. But rarely were these women given a chance to sit at the table and partake in the creation of a new postcolonial world order.

Where women only occupied the interstices of the Maghreb Generation's Pan-African project, imaginary women flourished. Land, cities, deserts, countries, were envisioned as women to be seduced, conquered, and brandished like a flag. To Joans, the Sahara was a "huge brown nude, with immense thighs," whose surface was so sharp "thus not allowing you to sleep with this enormous African woman, that is so hot during the day, and can be cold for all men as soon as the sun is swallowed by her."[25] These imaginary women tell us little of the lived experiences of Maghrebi, Black American, and Sub-Saharan women. They do however reveal the prevalence of sex, and questions of sexual liberation, in Pan-African circles. As René Depestre mandated in a poem entitled "Eros and Revolution":

> Your gun in one hand
> Your right to orgasm in the other
> Run naked towards the sun
> Raise your barricades
> Make your revolution.[26]

Again, and again, in the interviews they allowed me to conduct, my mostly male narrators talked of the women they met, and of the importance of women's struggles.

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[25] Ted Joans, "A Black Man guides All Yall to Africa," Box 12: 10-16, BANC MSS 99/244 z, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, CA, USA.
[26] René Depestre, "Éros et Révolution," *Rage de Vivre : Œuvre poétiques complètes* (Paris : Seghers, 2006), pp. 285-6.

And yet they almost always framed this struggle in terms of a sexual liberation – liberating women's bodies – as if the emotional and intellectual decolonization that these men so ardently sought for themselves could not apply to women. To many of these men it seemed that sexual liberation was the pinnacle of female liberation.

**On Intellectual and Cultural Decolonization: Finding Non-State Spaces and Actors**

In the 1960s, in the aftermath of decolonization, many of the new African and Middle Eastern governments skillfully appropriated the revolutions led against the colonial powers. Monopolizing postcolonial cultural production, they propagated the idea of freedom as collective liberation from foreign rule. In treating that concept as a truism, scholars have limited their study of decolonization to the political and territorial transfer between the former colonies and the new states, restricting the role of intellectuals and artists to that of anti-colonial agitators. Decolonization in that sense only took place in the context of the relationship between colonizer and colonized. It was not a process that could be inwardly focused, geared towards mental or psychological decolonization.[27] This scholarship has thus rendered invisible a generation of intellectuals and artists who understood decolonization as a *longue-durée* process, and that anti-colonial struggles were not just about claiming land for the new nation-states, but also about the liberation of the human mind and soul. In his 2016 monograph, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World,* historian Jeffrey James Byrne contends that the idealistic phase of decolonization in Algeria, in which a diversity of political ideals

[27] Yoav Di Capua, *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre, and Decolonization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 14-16.

mingled and coexisted, ended as early as 1965.[28] In the Third World Order, he claims, sovereignty and national authority were valued above all, "the state had become not only the sole legitimate manifestation of national liberation or 'freedom' but also the irreplaceable instrument of humanity's aspirations, for the wretched of the earth at least."[29] A sad verdict for a region in which the state was becoming increasingly repressive.

While Byrne limits his analysis to state actors, historian Yoav Di-Capua, author of *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre and Decolonization,* tells the stories of a generation of Arab existentialists who did not hesitate to confront the "ubiquity of patriarchal norms, sexual repression, political impasse, state authoritarianism, violence and an overall absence of freedom and possibilities for self-liberation."[30] Indeed, intellectuals, and, I argue, artists, repeatedly challenged their states' authoritarianism, careful not to confuse the construction of the postcolonial identity with a brand of nationalism that condoned exclusion and repression. Sovereignty and national liberation appealed to militant-artists only insofar as it did not impede upon their right to speak, to create, and to recite. Much like the Czech dissidents that historian Jonathan Bolton introduces in *Worlds of Dissent*, these militant-artists "uncomfortably straddled two spaces—the space of a universal public, open to all interested parties, and that of a bounded public, theoretically open to all but also defined by particular customs, value, and goals."[31] To assume that these militant-artists were duped by their government's

[28] James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 291.
[30] Yoav Di Capua, *No Exit, op.cit.*, p. 128.
[31] Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe and Czech Culture under Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 16.

rhetoric of national sovereignty is to ignore the culture of dissidence that was rooted in the colonial period, matured through the era of decolonization and resulted in the Tunisian revolution and the protests against Bouteflika's fifth term in Algiers in 2019. But in order to find this culture of dissent we must look outside the state, its people and infrastructures, to alternative sites of political engagement: the radio airwaves, the pages of magazines, festivals gatherings, and the intimate spaces of bedrooms. [32] Dissent was a political theory but also an entire world onto itself.

In these alternative sites of engagement, we find a generation of artist-militants who were convinced that decolonization was not finished, that continued vigilance was necessary in order to ward off the sticky hands of neocolonialism and truly achieve cultural, intellectual, and psychological independence. In a departure from their parents' generation who fought for territorial independence, these young poets, writers, painters and filmmakers conceived of an anti-colonial struggle that was not simply about reclaiming land for the new nation-state, but more importantly, would bring about "the inner liberation of the human subject."[33] Looking at non-state actors decenters the state and its ambitions in the study of postcolonial Pan-Africanism. While many of my narrators occupied governmental posts or worked for their governments at one time or another, almost all of them were eventually excluded from the nation-building project precisely because of their refusal to conform to their states' injunction that the revolution was over. Their continued revolt led them to the torture chamber, jail, and even death.

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[32] For a discussion of the process of intellectual decolonization as autonomous from the state see: Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Négritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015) and Aishwary Kumar, *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi, and the Risk of Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).
[33] Yoav Di Capua, *No Exit, op.cit.*, p. 174.

**Bridging the Saharan Divide and Locating the Black Maghreb**

Despite its location on the Mediterranean and its long history as a crossroads between the Middle East, Africa and Europe, North Africa has remained marginal to the historiographies of all those regions. The Sahara still acts as a dividing line between the Maghreb and West Africa, a partition reflected in academic scholarship. A new generation of historians and geographers have started to break down this construct by revealing the dynamic movement of people, goods, and ideas through the various regions of Northern Africa in the pre-colonial and colonial eras.[34] More recently a few scholars have foregrounded the Maghreb as a Pan-African political and cultural hub in the postcolonial era.[35] These scholars are writing against decades of colonial dictates and policies that purposefully attempted to sever the Maghreb from Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, the French were terrified that trans-continental solidarity would develop between their territories for, bound by a general sense of discontent with the French empire, these

[34] Some titles focusing on the Trans-Saharan trade include: Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (ed,), in *Bridges Across the Sahara : Social, Economic and Cultural Impact of the Trans-Sahara Trade during the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009); Ali Austen*, Trans-Saharan Africa in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Western Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); James McDougall and Judith Scheele (eds.), *Saharan Frontiers : Space and Mobility in Northwest Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh, "La caravane et la caravelle: Les deux âges du commerce de l'Ouest saharien." *L'Ouest Saharien/The Western Sahara*, 2, (2000), pp. 29–70. Other scholars such as John Hunwick, Bruce Hall, Bernard Lewis, Chouki el Hamel, and Eve Troutt-Powell have examined the construction and fluctuation of racial categories in the Sahara and the Sahel, that is in the spaces of intersection between Black, White, Arab, and more. Some titles include but are not limited to: Eve Troutt-Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egyptian Nationalists and the Mastery of the Sudan, 1875- 1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Bruce Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011); John Hunwick and Eve M. Troutt Powell (eds.), *The Same But Different: Documents on African Slavery in the Islamic Mediterranean (19th-20th Centuries*) (Markus Wiener Press, Inc., 2002); Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Chouki El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[35] See: Brahim El Guabli, "Refiguring Pan-Africanism through Algerian-Moroccan Competitive Festivals, *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 20, No 7, pp. 1053-1071; Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World Order*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Ghislaine Lydon, "Writing Trans-Saharan History: Methods, Sources and Interpretations Across the African Divide," *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 10, No 3-4, (2005).

unions could breed anti-European sentiment and push towards anti-colonialism. In order to save their empire, the French drew a line in the sand between Arab and Black Africa and exploited linguistic and cultural differences between Berbers and Arabs in the Maghreb.[36] Building on a number of scholars' recent engagement with the Maghreb my dissertation centers the Maghreb in the Pan-African and Third-World order of the early postcolonial period.

In his seminal 1993 book, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Paul Gilroy developed the concept of the Black Atlantic, a "single, complex unit of analysis," which historians must use to reinstate the Black contribution and contributors to the modern world.[37] Gilroy demonstrates the cruciality of "middle-passages" and of the ship—as a political and cultural site, a new chronotype for the shaping of modern Black identities on both sides of the Atlantic. Gilroy does not adequately explore his own unit of analysis however. In the triangle of the Black Atlantic, Gilroy examines only two axes: Africa to America and America to Europe, and one language: English. In *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (2003), Brent Hayes Edwards expands on Gilroy's Black Atlantic and retraces the encounters between Black intellectuals from both the Anglophone and the Francophone world in Paris. Hayes Edwards, like Gilroy, centers his analysis on encounters in the European metropoles. These scholars' work, as well the works of

[36] Jean-Louis Triaud, "Le Crépuscule des Affaires Musulmane en AOF," in David Robinson, Jean-Louis Triaud (eds.), *Le Temps des Marabouts: Itinéraires et Stratégies Islamiques en Afrique Occidentale Française, v. 1880-1960* (Paris: Karthala, 1997), pp. 500-506; Bruce Hall, *A History of Race, op.cit.*; Ghislaine Lydon, « Writing Trans-Saharan History, » *op.cit.*

[37] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 15.

historians in the Black Paris or Black London subgenre, have transformed the history of the Atlantic into a story that highlights Black crossings and encounters.[38]

North Africa, however, figures very little in the literature of the Black Atlantic despite the long history of Black American writers and artists writing extensively about the plight of Maghrebis in Europe, and about their own travels to North Africa.[39] Josephine Baker, famous dancer and singer, spent much of World War II leading the French resistance efforts from Morocco and providing Moroccan passports to Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.[40] Black American writers James Baldwin, Claude McKay, and William Gardner Smith, while they were residing in Paris, travelled to Morocco, and expressed their solidarity for the Algerians of France at length.[41] "He [the Algerian], and

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[38] Such works include but are not limited to: Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000); Kamari Maxine Clark and Deborah A Thomas (eds.), *Globalization and Race: Transformations in the Cultural Production of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Surreptitious Speech: Presence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947-1987* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Pap N'Diaye, *La Condition Noire: Essai sur une minorité française* (Paris: Folio, 2009); Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (eds), *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Négritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African-Americans in the City of Lights* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin,1996).

[39] In the past decade a few American scholars, such as Michael Gomez, Samir Meghelli and Sohail Daulatzai, primarily interested in the study of Islam in the United States, have started to chart the connections between Black Americans and the Middle East, in which they include North Africa. This important work constructs an intellectual history of the Black American Diaspora and reveals the global networks of ideas that these communities participated in. Since their focus is on Islamic networks, however, they have not fully addressed North Africa's participation in secular transnational solidarities such as Pan-Africanism. These works include but are not limited to: Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond American* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Melani McAlister, "One Black Allah: The Middle East in the Cultural Politics of African American Liberation, 1955-1970," *American Quarterly*, 51.3, (1999), pp. 622-656; Sherman Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Towards the Third Resurrection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[40] Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir, op.cit.*

[41] In William Gardner Smith's 1963 *The Stone Face*, the protagonist Simeon Brown, a black man from Philadelphia, moves to Paris in the hopes of finding solace from the unbearable racism in the United States. He does for a bit and quickly realizes, through interactions with French men and women, that he has nothing to fear because "you understand, we like Negroes here, we don't practice racism in France, it's not like the United States." [William Gardner Smith, *The Stone Face* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1963), p. 208.] Simeon eventually grasps that French racism targets the Algerians living in Paris. He

his brothers were, in fact, being murdered by my hosts. And Algeria, after all, is a part of Africa, and France, after all, is a part of Europe," wrote Baldwin in 1972, "The Algerian and I were both, alike, victims of this history, and I was still a part of Africa, even though I had been carried out of it nearly four hundred years before."[42] This is a crucial anecdote because, as Tyler Stovall discusses in his field-defining dissertation *Paris Noir: African-Americans in the City of Lights*, France had always seemed like an appealing place for Black Americans fleeing American white supremacy—many Black Americans mistakenly assuming that White French people were less racist than their White American counterparts. Baldwin realized, however, that the French were no less racist, simply that their racism was directed towards a different other: the Algerian.

Inspired by the "Black Atlantic" scholars Paul Gilroy and Brent Hayes Edwards, my work explores conversations occurring in multiple languages, through a variety of mediums, across thousands of miles of ocean. Departing from Edwards and Gilroy, I decenter the colonial metropoles of Paris, London, and New York, and argue that the three Maghrebi countries—Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia—functioned as the cardinal liberated spaces in which artist-militants or the Maghrebi Generation imagined a variety of communities, some transnational (Pan-African, Third-Worldist) others decidedly nationalistic (Angolan, Black American). I seek to complicate the master narrative that

befriends several Algerians and witnesses the October 1961 Maurice Papon massacre. An Algerian man in a cafe, angered by Simeon's naive conception of race, chides: "We're the niggers here! Know what the French call us —*bicot, melon, raton, nor'af*. That means *nigger* in French. Ain't you scared we might rob you? Ain't you appalled by our unpressed clothes, our body odor? No, but seriously, I want to ask you a serious question—would you let your daughter marry one of us?" [*Ibid.*, p.57.] In the end Simeon returns to the United States and begins to refer to Black Americans as the Algerians of the United States. In this fascinating novel not only does William Gardner Smith shed light on the horrific treatment of Algerians in France, he turns Black Americans' conception of race on its head—Algerians become the ultimate victims and those who suffer are thus Algerian.

[42] James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*, published in *Collected Essays* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1998), p. 377.

presents Paris, London, Lisbon, and New York as the favored headquarters for African revolutionaries. My research reveals that non-metropole cities (such as Rabat, Algiers, or Tunis) functioned as more compelling bases for postcolonial militancy, precisely because they were liberated, and they provided a space free from the colonial gaze. Paris had been the ideal setting for people like Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire to construct themselves *vis-a-vis* the white colonists: the French capital was the birthplace of *négritude*.

But in the late 1950s, and early 1960s, a younger generation of intellectuals, militants and artists no longer cared for Paris, its niceties, or for the white ally and interlocutor. They no longer thought of themselves as theorists of cultural independence, but as practitioners of psychological and cultural decolonization—a practice which required their presence on the African continent. Unlike Senghor, or even Fanon, whose books had been prefaced by French writers, the Maghreb Generation refused the European introducer and interlocutor, directing their thoughts and arguments to the Third World, and physically moving to the Maghreb's Anti-Imperial Metropolises.[43] One after the other, the Maghrebi capitals of Rabat, Algiers, and Tunis became safe-havens for the Maghreb Generation.

**Archival Sources and Oral Histories**

This project uncovers a history of postcolonial collaboration between artists from across the globe. In order to write a narrative of grassroots revolutionary activism, I travelled to the Maghreb, France, and the United States. I conducted interviews and

[43] Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third-World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

scoured through artists' personal papers, putting together a personal archive of letters, pamphlets, and memorabilia donated by my interviewees. By utilizing sources in English, French, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, and Arabic, this project captures the lived experiences of artists from Berkeley to Port-au-Prince and Dakar, who moved through the Maghreb in the 1960s and '70s.

Because of the nature of the contemporary Maghrebi regimes I was unable to access state archives, either because I was not authorized to, or because these archives seemingly did not exist. Only in Tunisia was I able to examine documents in the National Archive, but these were few and far between. Most of the JCC archives, it seems, have not been classified by the Tunisian Ministry of Culture. I have relied on sources from the French Diplomatic Archives in Nantes to better understand the political context behind the Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian regimes' various Pan-African projects. The French were active and worried observers of any sort of anti-imperial rapprochement between the Maghreb and the Sub-Saharan governments. The French embassies wrote extensive reports to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning Morocco's involvement in arms trades with the Lusophone militants, the PANAF, and the JCC. They commented, with some relief it seemed, on the tensions between the Maghrebi states, and between the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, they continued to play a large part in those divisions, leveraging their technical, economic, and cultural cooperation, to promote pro-French politics on the African continent. All of these divisive dynamics are visible in the documents from the Nantes Diplomatic Archives, masquerading under the guise of cultural reporting on the events in the Maghreb.

Collections of personal papers, such as the Jean Sénac archives in Marseille and Algiers, the René Depestre Archives in Limoges, the Ted Joans Archive in Berkeley or the online Casa Comum archives, have allowed me to delve into the lives of a few of the characters in this project. These archives include a seemingly random selection of documents from these actors' lives, everything from the predictable political manifestos, tourist brochures, correspondence, unpublished poetry, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings, to the more surprising sexually explicit drawings and half-smoked cigarettes. The nature of Joans, Sénac, Depestre, and their peers' lives, however, means that there are significant gaps in the documentation—papers that were lost, forgotten, or destroyed during moves, forced exiles, or after their death.

Another major source of written archival material comes directly from the protagonists of this book. Indeed, upon interviewing people like Kaiser Cheriaa, Hassan Dalldoul, Sarah Maldoror and others, they gave me or allowed me to copy documents that they had in their possession. These documents were invaluable in complementing the interviews I conducted with them, and the gaps in the state archives. Of course, they were also only a portion of the materials produced during the 1960s and '70s and, thus, only reflect what some people thought it was important to keep.

In addition to written sources, this project relies on thirty-two oral history interviews conducted in France, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and the United States between 2018 and 2019. Though I interviewed in Morocco and Algeria, the majority of the interviews I conducted were with Tunisia filmmakers and film critics. Because archival documentation was sparse when it came to the JCC, oral interviews provided the majority of the information for the Tunisian section of the project. Most of my narrators,

the Tunisian filmmakers as well as those I interviewed in Algeria, Morocco, France, and the United States, had been interviewed before. This meant that many of them were familiar with the interview setting and had fixed some of their memories through retelling them over and over. When I brought up information that I had found in the archive, or asked questions about their relationships to specific people, I was sometimes able to break the repetition of a fixed narrative, and bring up recollections that did not always fit into a well-worn narrative. Because many of my interviewees were committed to narrating a specific political project, informed by contemporary concerns and by a general nostalgia for a period of African history that they saw as brighter, they often overlooked tensions, ignoring or even disputing the influence of racial prejudice in these various Pan-African projects. One topic however, when broached, revealed the strain of what actual encounters between people from the Maghreb Generation produced: sex.

My method of interviewing was semi-structured. I often began with a few questions but generally let my narrators direct the interviews themselves, which led to some unintended conversations, including one particular theme which came up again and again: sex and women's sexual liberation. Of the thirty-two people I interviewed only nine were women. None of the women discussed sex or intimacy with me, and, in fact, when I asked Sarah Maldoror about her husband Mario de Andrade she responded with a curt "That is my private business, Madame."[44] The men I interviewed, however, brought up sexual fantasies and sexual encounters frequently, revealing the many ways in which these encounters challenged or cemented their racial perceptions of themselves and others. Chapter four, which relies on oral histories I conducted as well as interviews led

[44] Sarah Maldoror, interview with author, July 28th, 2018, Saint-Denis, France.

by my colleagues in the PANAFEST archival project, came out of these uncomfortable, but revealing encounters.

**Dissertation Topography**

My project moves chronologically and geographically from late-1950s Rabat, through late-1960s Algiers, and to early-1970s Tunis. The dissertation is divided into three parts: "Morocco and the Luso-Africans," "Algeria and the Pan-African Festival of Algiers," and "Tunisia, the JCC, and Bourguiba's Soft-Pan-Africanism." Each chapter focuses on a case-study of a specific transnational encounter between militant-artists from the Maghreb Generation. Scholars who have written about the Pan-African interests of the Maghreb in the 1950s through the 1970s have tended to assume that the Maghreb's interest in Sub-Saharan Africa and African liberation movement was mostly rhetorical, arguing that if there were no material gains (military or financial, in particular) then there were not concrete signs of collaboration. While, as I demonstrate in the first chapter, weapons and money did exchange hands, I hope to emphasize that cultural exchange can be just as concrete as guns or bills.

Beginning in Morocco, the first chapter of my dissertation follows the peregrinations of a group of Luso-African poets and militants from Lisbon to Paris to Rabat. Starting in the late 1950s, these young militants used Rabat as a home base for anti-colonial activism in the Portuguese colonies. Morocco served as a liberated space on the African continent, where they could imagine what one could be in the wake of empire. There, they met young Moroccan writers who were haunted by similar concerns over their role in the postcolonial world, amongst them poet Abdellatif Laâbi, founder of

the Moroccan literary journal *Souffles*. The second chapter centers on the editorial group of *Souffles*. Over the course of seven years of publication from 1966-1973, *Souffles* took off from a small Moroccan literary journal to a paper caucus through which writers from across the African continent and the Diaspora called for an African cultural revolution. Against the backdrop of increasing competition over resources and Saharan borders between Morocco and Algeria, my third chapter traces the move of revolutionary infatuation away from the Moroccan king, Hassan II, and toward the Algerian president, Ahmed Ben Bella, who aspired to become the leader of the Third-World. By the mid-1960s, Algiers was teeming with revolutionaries from across Africa, the Americas, and Asia. Not all in Algiers, however, were enthusiastic supporters of the Algerian government's bid for Pan-African and Third-World leadership. My third chapter sets itself in contrast to previous scholarship on the Pan-African Festival of Algiers of 1969. It gives voice to poets and artists from Algeria and all over the world, who viewed the Festival as a facade erected to conceal the decaying ideals that had once sustained the Algerian Revolution. My fourth chapter offers a window into the carnal underbelly of Algiers' status as the Mecca of Revolution, by looking at sexual and romantic interactions between artists of the Maghreb Generation during the PANAF in 1969. Finally, my fifth chapter turns to Tunisia's attempt to match Moroccan and Algerian Pan-African leadership. The Tunisian Cultural Ministry, determined to become a key player in the African cultural scene, created the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage in 1966. Under the joint leadership of Tunisian intellectual Tahar Cheriaa and Senegalese novelist and director Ousmane Sembène, the biennale emerged as a Pan-African forum for anti-neocolonial resistance.

This dissertation examines a period of African, Middle Eastern, and World History that many scholars have interpreted as nationally-bound, but that I cast as a fundamentally transnational moment. My research places the Maghreb at the center of debates about postcolonial subjectivity and brings to the fore narratives of many forgotten characters of the postcolonial period—few of whom have been the subject of historical monographs. Weaving together micro and macro histories, I make the case for a history of the Maghreb that includes the entire African continent, much of the Middle East and all of the Black Atlantic, and that situates the region as a center of intellectual and cultural production in the second half of the 20th century.

# Part I: Morocco and the Luso-Africans

## Chapter 1. "My Cry of Revolt:" Luso-African Revolutionaries in Rabat

*"Meu grito de revolta ecoou pelos vales mais longínquos da Terra [...]Não respeitou fronteiras/ Meu grito de revolta fez vibrar os peitos de todos os Homens"*[45]

*« My cry of revolt echoes in the longest valleys of the Earth […] It respects no borders/My cry of revolt vibrates in the chests of all Men."*

- Amilcar Cabral, 1966

### Introduction

In the early, boisterous years of Moroccan independence, Rabat was the place to be: vibrant and multicultural, the city was a gateway between the Arab World, Europe, and Africa. Due to its strategic geographic location on the shores of the Mediterranean and to the welcoming policies of Moroccan King Mohammed V, Rabat attracted dozens of militants from Portugal's colonies in Africa—including Angolan Mario Pinto de Andrade, Mozambican Marcelino dos Santos, Cape Verdean Amilcar Cabral, and Goan Aquino de Bragança—who yearned to return to the African continent. By 1961, Rabat had become the nerve center of nationalists from the Portuguese colonies, providing room and board as well as military training to young revolutionaries from across the Luso-African world. Using sources from the French Diplomatic Archives in Nantes and the offices of the Conference of Nationalist Organization of the Portuguese Colonies, together with the testimonies of some of the leaders (or their family members) of these liberation movements, this chapter unveils Morocco's forgotten role in the colonial and postcolonial struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. It reveals that Rabat was the birthplace of

[45] Amilcar Cabral "Quem e que não se lembra," 1946, Lisbon, cited in Gerald M. Moser, "The Poet Amilcar Cabral," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (Autumn 1978), pp. 176-197, p. 194.

the Maghreb Generation—a network that grew, at first with the help of the Moroccan state, and later despite the obstruction of the Moroccan state.

After a short overview of the literature on Morocco's forgotten Pan-Africanism, the first part of this chapter examines the experiences of Cabral, Dos Sandos, Andrade, and Bragança, prior to their move to Rabat, in the colonial capitals of Lisbon and Paris. In the hallways of the Casa dos Estudantes do Império and in the backroom of the editing house Présence Africaine, these young Luso-Africans met and fraternized with many eminent African and Black intellectuals, including the founders of the *négritude* movement. In the late 1950s, however, spurred by their meeting and reading Frantz Fanon, these men broke from the *négritude* generation, emphasizing instead material concerns and their connection with non-elite, rural, and poor Africans. As Cabral famously said in 1966 at the Havana Tricontinental Conference—a conference which both he and Andrade attended—there is no point in banging on the tam-tam for "it is not by screaming or writing bad words against imperialism that we will defeat it."[46] The Luso-African militant-poets claimed to be one with the masses, "for it did not suffice to keep up a purely intellectual attitude, to sing the distress and the alienation of the people, but one must merge with the masses in its roots and its everyday life," explained Mozambican poet Virgilio de Lemos, in a 1966 edition of *Présence Africaine* dedicated to African poetry.[47] And that is why, Lemos continued, "the majority of the poets present

[46] Amilcar Cabral, "A Arma da teoria," 1966, Havana Tricontinental Conference, cited in Carlos Comitini, *Amilcar Cabral: A Arma da teoria* (Rio de Janeiro: Codecri, 1980), p. 23.
[47] *Présence Africaine* is a quarterly cultural, political, and literary journal published in Paris. It was founded in 1947 by Alioune Diop and expanded in 1949 to include a publishing house. It was a powerful tribune for the *négritude* and Pan-African movements in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. *Présence Africaine* organized the First Congress of Black Writers in Paris in 1956. For more on *Présence Africaine* see Valentin Y. Mudimbe (ed.), *The Surreptitious Speech: "Présence Africaine" and the Politics of Otherness, 1947-1987* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Jules-Rosette Bennetta, *Black Paris: The African Writer's Landscape* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998) as well as well as Raissa Brescia, "África imaginada : história

in this collection are at this very moment in Portuguese prisons, in Lisbon or Africa, or in exile abroad."[48]

In addition to emphasizing material concerns, these young Luso-African militant-poets moved away from the more nationalist preoccupations of their forefathers. Their decision to move to Rabat demonstrates their transnational inclination. In Morocco, they developed contacts with militant-poets from across Africa and the Diaspora, spent time in the Union Marocaine du Travail premises, trained with soldiers from the Royal army, met Nelson Mandela, and worked to create a transnational grassroots movement that did not hesitate to challenge the postcolonial state when it became authoritarian. They cultivated a revolutionary rhetoric that accounted for their moving in and out of favor with the Moroccan government. If independent nationhood was central to their rhetoric, they were unwilling to sacrifice their ideals for any government, or so they claimed. As scholar Alexandra Reza argues, "this lack of contradiction between nationalism and cosmopolitanism was typical of many African anti-colonialists," and, I would argue, anti-neocolonialists, "whose discourses and practices inscribed commitments and spatial imaginaries that critiqued and surpassed the national state even as they fought for national independence. For them, there was no stark choice to be made between their nation-to-be and humanity: the choice was strategic and temporally contingent rather than mutually exclusive. They saw nationalism as both necessary and insufficient to the greater goal of wider freedom."[49]

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intelectual, pan-africanismo, nação e unidade africana na "Présence Africaine" (1947-1966)," PhD Dissertation, (Bordeaux 3, 2018).

[48] Virgilio de Lemos, "Poesia africana de expressão portuguesa, breve nota explicativa," *Présence Africaine*, Number 57, 1966/1, p. 434.

[49] Alexandra Reza, "African Anti-Colonialism and the Ultramarinos of the Casa dos Estudantes do Império," *Journal of Lusophone Studies*, 1.1, (Spring 2016), p. 38. Reza explains that scholars have tended to express confusion at this ambivalence. Cemil Aydin talked of a puzzle, while Vijay Prashad talks of

And so, as the second part of this chapter demonstrates, Rabat became a new cultural metropolis, the first home of the Maghreb Generation, attracting intellectuals and artists from across Africa and the Third-World. The Maghreb Generation was less troubled with asserting their national or racial identity and more concerned with direct political action. But as Morocco settled into political independence, the Royal Government's political alliances started to shift. The increasingly repressive attitudes of the Mohammed V's successor, the young King Hassan II, motivated Luso-African militants to move their base to Algiers, and to disentangle themselves from a Moroccan government that was now clearly siding with the West. The chapter ends with the Luso-African's move away from Rabat.

**Morocco's Forgotten Pan-Africanism**

"There is one fact I want to emphasize," insisted Noureddine Djoudi in a 2018 interview at the hotel Saint-George in Algiers, "Morocco did not assist African liberation movements like Algeria. They are making all this noise now, organizing conferences, but they did not help, not really."[50] Djoudi, an Algerian who grew up in Morocco, was the primary spokesperson of postcolonial Algeria in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the late 1950s, Djoudi trained in an Algerian National Liberation camp near the Moroccan city of Oujda. When Algeria gained its independence in 1962, he served as the Algerian Ambassador to

"internationalist nationalism," and Rahual Rao of a "space between cosmopolitanism and nationalism." [Cemil Aydin, "Pan-Nationalism of Pan-Islamic, Pan-Asian, and Pan-African Thought," *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, John Breuilly (ed) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 672-693; Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007); Rahul Rao, *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)].

[50] Noureddine Djoudi, interview with author, March 27, 2018, Algiers, Algeria.

almost a dozen African countries until the 1980s.[51] Two days after our initial interview, as we drove to Zeralda to meet Nelson Mandela's grandson, Djoudi reiterated that I should make sure to "get the story straight."[52] Djoudi was determined to rectify what he perceived as a budding and problematic historical narrative. "Morocco did not play a central role in helping liberation movements," he repeated for the umpteenth time.[53]

Djoudi's insistence is a testament to the enduring competition and strife between Morocco and Algeria, not only when it comes to their involvement in Pan-African politics but also to the question of their desert borders.[54] However, Djoudi's emphasis is above all a response to the rise in scholarly and public attention to the part that the Maghreb played in the 1960s and '70s in hosting revolutionary movements and in training freedom fighters from across Africa and the Caribbean. Books such as historian Jeffrey James Byrne's 2016 *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World* and Elaine Mokhtefi's 2018 *Algiers Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers*, have established Algeria, in particular, as a hub of revolutionary activity and as a key player in determining the ideology and composition of the Third World and Pan-African communities.[55] Algeria hosted and trained what Byrnes

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[51] State Department telegram to US embassy in Lagos, November 6th 1970, Folder 'Pol ALG-UAR, 1/1/70', WHCF, State Department Telegrams, Box 2039, RG 59, Entry 1613, NARA, cited in Mohamed Lakhdar Guettas, *Algeria and the Cold War: International Relations and the Struggle for Autonomy* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2018), p. 95.

[52] Noureddine Djoudi, interview with author, March 27, 2018, Algiers, Algeria.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] The 1963 War of the Sands started with a series of desert skirmishes along the Algerian-Moroccan desert border—skirmishes that escalated into full-blown conflict between the two young nations at the end of September 1963. The war was a result of the absence of clear delineation between the two countries and of the discovery of important natural resources in the disputed area. The war ended in November 1963 but the rivalry between the two countries continued well beyond the war, influencing Algeria's policy vis-à-vis the Western Sahara. See Pierre Vermeren, *Histoire du Maroc Depuis l'indépendance,* (Paris: la Découverte, 2002), p. 36-7.

[55] See: Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Samir Meghelli, "'A Weapon In Our Struggle For Liberation': Black Arts, Black Power, and the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival," in *The Global Sixties in Sound and*

calls the "pieds rouges" [red feet], a babel of leftists, revolutionaries and other idealists from around the globe drawn in by the country's reputation as the Mecca of Revolution.[56]

When it comes to the history of Pan-Africanism or Third-Worldism, the scholarship on Algeria completely overshadows Morocco. Scholars have ignored the fact that, before Algeria had even attained its independence, the Kingdom of Morocco served as a hub for "pieds rouges" from around the world and Africa in particular.[57] In fact, the Algerian freedom fighters were themselves trained in Moroccan camps, such as the one near Oujda where Noureddine Djoudi sojourned. From the late-1950s into the mid-1960s,

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*Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt*, (eds), Timothy Scott Brown and Andrew Lison, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Samir Meghelli, "From Harlem to Algiers: Transnational Solidarities Between the African American Freedom Movement and Algeria, 1962-1978," in *Black Routes to Islam*, (eds), Manning Marable and Hishaam Aidi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Elaine Mokhtefi, *Algiers, Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers* (London: Verso, 2018); Ben Salama, *Alger: La Mecque des Révolutionnaires*, 56 minutes, 2016, Arte France; Ode Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Not to forget, of course, Matthew Connelly's book, which first demonstrated the international nature of the FLN's fight against the French. Before the postcolonial Algerian state served as a home-base for liberation groups from across Africa and the world, the FLN had already harnessed the nascent forces of globalization to lead a struggle for international public opinion, rather than confront France in a purely military struggle. See: Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[56] The leftist from around the world were dubbed the pieds-rouges in reference to the French pieds-noirs, colonial Algeria's European inhabitants. See Byrne, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[57] Scholarship on Morocco's role in assisting the liberation struggles in Sub-Saharan Africa is sparse compared to the work that lauds Algeria's active participation in training and hosting liberation movements from the Lusophone world and South Africa. Perhaps this is partly because Morocco's support was more discreet than Algeria's and was a point of contention within the Moroccan administration. It may also be a consequence of the lack of sources; the Moroccan National archives have kept no records of the government's' financial or administrative assistance to African liberation movements, or at least no archives that are accessible to the public. When I visited the Moroccan National archives in January 2018, the archivists assured me that I would find nothing about the postcolonial period and recommended searching the French Diplomatic Archives in Nantes. Traces of Morocco's involvement are visible within the collection of the Nantes Diplomatic Archives. Most of the documents were issued by the French embassies in Morocco and were intended for the French Foreign Services. They carry a strong French bias, of course, and tend to underestimate Morocco's anti-Western tendencies, as it seems France was determined to think of Morocco as an ally in comparison to its bellicose neighbor, Algeria. Other information comes from the offices of the CONPC (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies), established in Casablanca in April 1961, but very few of their pamphlets have been conserved. Together with the testimonies of some of the leaders (or their family members) of these liberation movements, these sources give a glimpse into the rich history of the network of militants from the Portuguese colonies using Rabat as a home base to plan and preach decolonization and African liberation.

Morocco took a front-row seat in the deliberations over the future of Africa, toeing a revolutionary and anti-Western line that many have overlooked.

Morocco's involvement with African liberation groups in the late-1950s and early-1960s was much more complicated and convoluted than Noureddine Djoudi or the Moroccan government now make it out to be. In the late-1950s, the newly established Moroccan government enthusiastically provided money and weapons to a variety of independence movements from across Africa. When King Mohammed V died in early 1961, his son and successor, Hassan II, started to retract his government's financial and rhetorical support for such movements and isolated Morocco from many of its revolutionary African allies, turning instead towards Muslim-majority countries.[58] This explains, in part, current oblivion about Morocco's past history of support to international revolutionaries. By 1962, the newly independent Algeria filled in the vacuum created by Morocco's abandonment of revolutionary movements. In that sense, Noureddine Djoudi

[58] The young King Hassan II was convinced that he needed to reestablish the exterior policy balance in favor of the Western bloc and restore, domestically, a certain level of economic and social conservatism. Strongly supported by the conservative and nationalist branch of the Istiqlal, the government's main concern was to stave off the UNFP (Union Nationale des Forces Populaires), a syndicalist and Third-Worldist break-off the Istiqlal, whose allegiances were more to the Eastern bloc. See Vermeren, *Histoire du Maroc, op.cit.,* pp. 30-32. Breaking with his father's policies, Hassan II turned towards majority Muslim countries, sent money to build mosques in Dakar, strengthened Tijani connections with West Africa, built a gigantic mosque in Casablanca, and vied to become the commander of the African faithful. For more on Hassan II's relationship to Islam, the Levant, and the African continent see: Jennifer Roberson, *The Changing Face of Morocco under King Hassan II*, *Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2014), pp. 57-87; Abdessamad Belhaj, *La dimension islamique dans la politique étrangère du Maroc : déterminants, acteurs, orientations* (Louvain-la-neuve : Presse Universitaire de Louvain, 2009) ; Rodolpho Gil Benumeya, "Oriente Medio y nuevo Islam tras el viaje del rey Hassan II," *Revista de Politica Internacional*, Issue 97, (1968); Mohamed Daadaoui, "Islamism and the State in Morocco," *Hudson Institute*, April 29th 2016, https://www.hudson.org/research/12286-islamism-and-the-state-in-morocco; Cédric Baylocq, and Aziz Hlaoua, « Diffuser un « islam du juste milieu » ? Les nouvelles ambitions de la diplomatie religieuse africaine du Maroc, » *Afrique contemporaine*, vol. no 257, no. 1, (2016), pp. 113-128 ; Sarah Alaoui, « Morocco, commander of the (African) faithful ? » *Brookings*, April 8th 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/04/08/morocco-commander-of-the-african-faithful/.

was right: after 1962 Algeria's official support of African liberation struggles was much more significant than Morocco's.

## Roots of Dissent: Paris and Lisbon Third-World Metropolises

### *Lisbon and the Casa dos Estudantes do Império*

The Portuguese government created the Casa do Estudantes do Império (CEI) in 1944 to assist and supervise students from Portugal's African colonies studying in Lisbon.[59] Through the CEI, the Portuguese state hoped to prepare overseas subjects for imperial duties, to "create among the students a more useful national mentality, in order to count their dedication, patriotism and goodwill."[60] Instead, the Casa rapidly became a space of anti-colonial socialization, where Luso-Africans met, wrote poetry, edited the casa's literary organ *Mensagem*, and planned their respective countries' liberation struggles.

Mario Pinto de Andrade, born in Golungo-Alto Angola in 1928, moved to Lisbon in 1948 to study Latin and Greek at the University of Lisbon.[61] There, in the halls of the

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[59] For more information on the history of the Casa see: Antonio Faria, *Linha Estreita de Liberdade: A Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 1997); Martins Helder, *Casa dos Estudantes do Império: Subsídios para a História do Período Mais Decisivo da CEI (1953 a 1961)* (Alfragide: Caminho, 2017); Claudia Castelo and Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, eds., *Casa dos Estudantes do Império: Dinâmicas coloniais, conexões transnacionais* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2017); *Mensagem: Cinquentenário da Fundação da Casa dos Estudantes do Império 1944-1994* (Lisboa: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 1997). For an anthology of poetry from the Casa, see: *Antologias de Poesia da Casa dos Estudantes do Império*, Volumes 1 and 2, (Lisboa: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 1994).

[60] Daniel Dos Santos, *Amilcar Cabral: Um outro Olhar* (Lisbon: Chiado Editora, 2014), p. 79.

[61] Mario de Andrade was a typical product of the urban *assimilado* class of Angola. After studying at the Catholic Seminary in Luanda, he travelled to Portugal in 1948 to study at the University of Lisbon. As scholar Stefan Helgesson argues, Andrade could have easily looked "forward to a slice of the pie within rather than without the colonial system." [Stefan Helgesson, *Transnationalism in Southern African Literature: Modernists, Realists, and the Inequality of Print Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 2]. But instead of returning to Angola and taking his place in the colonial hierarchy, Andrade joined the vanguard of national liberation in Lisbon, and, along with his friends and colleagues at the Casa dos Estudantes do Império, attempted to theorize an African articulation of modernity. For Andrade's own take on Lusophone Africanity and *négritude* see his preface to the his 1953 *Cuaderno* of Luso-African poetry [Mario Pinto de Andrade and Francisco Tenreiro, *Poesia Negra de Expressao Portuguesa*, (Lisbon:

Casa, he met Amilcar Cabral who had moved from Cape Verde in 1945 to study at the Higher Institute of Agronomy (ISA) of the Technical University of Lisbon.[62] At their first meeting Andrade felt bubbling under his skin; "of course something was bubbling in our heads, not in a precise manner, not very well formulated—but we were in the process of formulating it, there was a collective subconscious being born."[63] After Cabral, Andrade met Angolan militant-poet Agostinho Neto, and Mozambican militant-poet Marcelino dos Santos.[64] The four of them formed the core of what scholars have in turn called the "Generation of 50," the "Generation of 48," or as Andrade himself preferred, "the Cabral Generation," named after the man Andrade considered the group's most illustrious member and leader.

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Livraria Escolar Editora, 1953)]. For more Andrade's later takes on the Luso-African poets' role in leading the people see*: Négritude Africana de Lingua Portuguesa* (Braga: Angelus Novus, 2000). For more on Mario de Andrade more generally see the excellent collection of essays and primary sources compiled by Inocencia Mata and Laura Padilha: *Mario Pinto de Andrade: Um intellectual na politica* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2000), his daughter, Henda de Andrade's homage to him: *Mario Pinto de Andrade: Um olhar intimo*, (Luanda: Caxinde, 2009), as well as Ilidio do Amaral*, Em Torno dos nacionalismos africanos: memorias e reflexoes em homenagem a Mario Pinto de Andrade*, (Porto: Granito Editores, 2000).

[62] For more on Cabral see the recent book in Ohio University Press' Short Histories collection: Peter Karibe Mendy, *Amilcar Cabral: A Nationalist and Pan-Africanist Revolutionary*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019). Mario de Andrade wrote a political biography of Cabral that is intimate and rigorous*: Amilcar Cabral: Essai de biographie politique* (Paris: Maspero, 1980). For a collection of essays on Cabral and his political and economic legacy in Cape Verde and in the world see: Luis Fonseca, Olivio Pired, and Rolando Martins (eds.), *Por Cabral, Sempre: Comunicações e discursos apresentados no Forum Internacional Amilcar Cabral* (Praia: Edição da Fundação Amilcar Cabral, 2016). For an in-depth analysis of Cabral's political philosophy see: Rabaka Reiland, *Concepts of Cabralism: Amilcar Cabral and Africana Critical Theory*, (Lanham: Lexington books, 2014). To learn more about Cabral the poet see: Gerald M. Moser, "The Poet Amilcar Cabral," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (Autumn 1978), pp. 176-197.

[63] Mario de Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," Mars 19th 1984, Fundo Mario de Andrade, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=10195.001.001, p. 49.

[64] Very little scholarship engages with Marcelino Dos Santos, despite the fact that he produced a lot of poetry and many political pamphlets and interviews. See: Boubaker Adjali, and Marcelino dos Santos. *Frelimo: Interview with Marcelino Dos Santos* (Richmond, B.C.: Liberation Support Movement, Information Center, 1971); Marcelino dos Santos, *Canto Do Amor Natural* (Maputo: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1987); Marcelino dos Santos, *Escrever É Criar* (Mozambique: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, AEMO, 1982).When scholars have written about Dos Santos it seems it is mostly in the context of an anthology or of a collection of testimonies about the FRELIMO. See: Tor Sellström, *Liberation in Southern Africa: Regional and Swedish Voices: Interviews from Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Frontline and Sweden* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999); Frederick G. Williams, *Poets of Mozambique: A Bilingual Selection* (New York: Luso-Brazilian Books, 2006).

After meeting Cabral and Neto, Andrade turned away from his classical studies; Greek and Latin seemed increasingly irrelevant. Eager to acquire a space in which they could learn, as well as educate their peers, about Africa, the four men created the Center of African Studies in the living room of their friends' the Espirito Santo Family. They still used the Casa to recruit new members, but did not feel that they could fully develop their "Africanity" in a setting that included the sons and daughters of colonizers who, as Mario de Andrade noted, "were not particularly interested in discovering their *négritude*."[65] At the Center of African Studies, Cabral would give presentations about African land, Neto would discuss African history, and Andrade would talk of African literature, oral traditions, and African languages.[66] They wrote for the literary journal *Mensagem*, read Césaire, Senghor, Black American poets Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, Cuban poet Nicolas Guillén, and Brazilian writer Jorge Amado, and, when they couldn't find Portuguese translations, translated them themselves.[67]

> We recited poems by Nicolas Guillén, it was obligatory, it was part of our patrimony, of the intellectual baggage of the progressive Africa, in Lisbon at the time: he must have read Senghor's *Anthology of Black and Malgache Literature*—my copy which had been through everyone's hands: I had lent it [...] to Agostinho Neto, of course Amilcar Cabral, I lost it later.[68]

They could recite Sartre's introduction to Senghor's *Anthology* by heart. They read and exchanged worn copies of the Pan-African quarterly cultural, political, and literary

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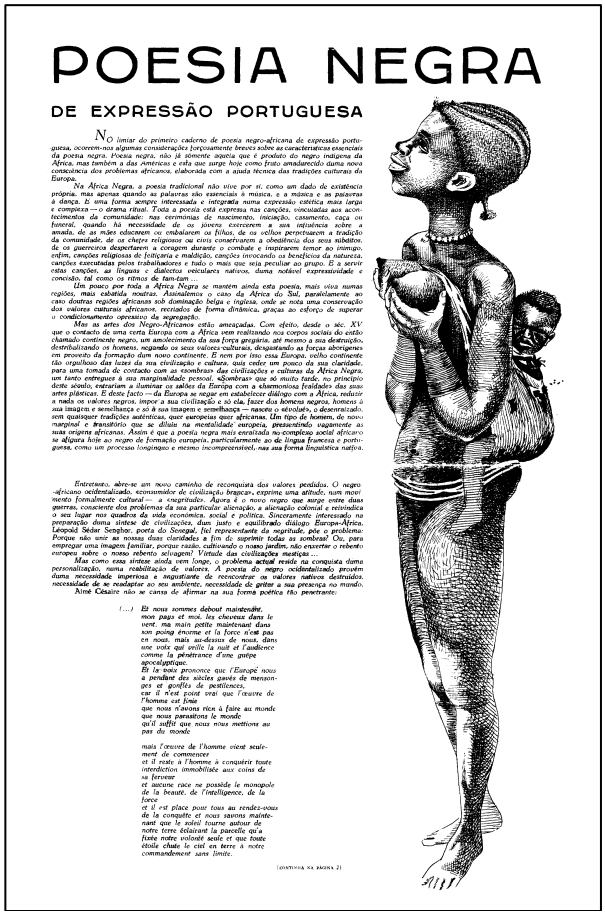
[65] Mario de Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, "Sur la première génération du MPLA: 1948-1960," *Lusotopie*, (1999), 6, p. 194.
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] Mario de Andrade notes that the Portuguese literary scene was relatively poor when it came to Marxist, or even progressive texts. In the Portuguese system, he bemoaned, "we had to learn Portuguese manuals by heart, [...] it was literally mimetic teaching, that one had to do in order to pass the exams." So, they would fill the voids left by the Portuguese education system, by turning to what came out of Brazil. Brazil, at the time, was much more progressive, and they would translate the Russians, like Nicolas Gogol, or the Black Americans, like Langston Hughes. [Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, *op.cit.,* p. 196].
[68] Mario de Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op.cit.,* p. 65.

magazine*, Présence Africaine*, which they received through two women who worked in the Buchholz Library, rumored to be two Nazi refugees in Portugal. They all read the same books, such as: *Os Negros da America*, which was about the struggle of Black Americans and Mao Zedong's, *La Longue Marche*.[69] The more they read, the more they developed their African consciousness, Andrade noted, for these texts were not simply cultural, the ideas in this literature had a clear political impact. When they read Alioune Diop's editorials in *Présence Africaine*, Andrade explained, it was like reading a battle cry.[70] In fact, Andrade revealed, they used literature to recruit young African scholars to their group. They would draw people in with conversations about literature, poetry readings, and then detect the "éléments conscients" [politically conscious individuals] and work them to see how far they would be willing to go in their political resistance.[71]

Mario de Andrade and his cohort of poets and friends were deeply inspired by the poems of the *négritude* movement. In fact, they "searched for their own *négritude*." In 1953, Mario de Andrade and his São-Toman friend Francisco Tenreiro published the *cuaderno* "Poesía Negra de Expressão Portuguesa," with the intention of publicizing a specifically Luso-African form of *négritude*, and of adding their cries to the chorus of black voices from the French Antilles and French West Africa. Inspired by Senghor's *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache,* Andrade's anthology included seven poets who wove Kibundu and Portuguese together in their poems; thus, articulating their duality, their Luso-Africanness.[72] Every member of the Cabral generation, in Lisbon

[69] Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, *op.cit.,* p. 199.
[70] Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op.cit.,* p. 82.
[71] Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op.cit.,* p. 85.
[72] Mario Pinto de Andrade and Francisco Tenreiro, *Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa*, (Lisbon: Livraria Escolar Editora, 1953).

or Luanda, went through the discovery of their *négritude*, explained Andrade, "it was our rupture with assimilation. We had to rediscover everything. Not just Angola, but Africa and the world, which the colonial administration had hidden, obscured from us." [73]



POESIA NEGRA

DE EXPRESSÃO PORTUGUESA

NO limiar do primeiro caderno de poesia negro-africana de expressão portuguesa, ocorrem-nos algumas considerações forçosamente breves sobre as características essenciais da poesia negra. Poesia negra, não já sòmente angola que é produto do negro indígena da África, mas também a das Américas e esta que surge hoje como fruto amadurecido duma nova consciência dos problemas africanos, elaborada com a ajuda técnica das tradições culturais da Europa.

Na África Negra, a poesia tradicional não vive por si, como um dado de existência própria, mas apenas quando as palavras são essenciais à música, e a música e as palavras à dança. É uma forma sempre interessada e integrada numa expressão estética mais larga e complexa — o drama ritual. Toda a poesia está expressa nas canções, vinculadas aos acontecimentos da comunidade: nas cerimónias de nascimento, iniciação, casamento, caça ou funeral, quando há necessidade de os louvar, exercerem a sua influência sobre a amada, de as mães educarem os embalarem os filhos, de os velhos perpetuarem a tradição da comunidade, de os chefes religiosos ou civis conservarem a obediência dos seus súbditos, de os guerreiros despertarem a coragem durante o combate e inspirarem temor ao inimigo, enfim, canções religiosas de feitiçaria e maldição, canções invocando os benéficios da natureza, canções executadas pelos trabalhadores e tudo o mais que seja peculiar ao grupo. É a servir estas canções, as línguas e dialectos veiculares nativos, dums notável expressividade e concisão, tal como os ritmos de tam-tam.

Um pouco por toda a África Negra se mantém ainda esta poesia, mais viva numas regiões, mais esbatida noutras. Assinalemos o caso da África do Sul, paralelamente ao caso doutras regiões africanas sob dominação belga e inglesa, onde se nota uma conservação dos valores culturais africanos, recriados de forma dinâmica, graças ao esforço de superar o condicionamento opressivo da segregação.

Mas as artes dos Negro-Africanos estão ameaçadas. Com efeito, desde o séc. XV que o contacto de uma certa Europa com a África vem realizando nos corpos sociais do então chamado continente negro, um amolecimento da sua força geratriz, até mesmo a sua destruição, destribalizando os homens, negando os seus valores culturais, desgastando as forças aborígenes em proveito da formação dum novo continente. É nem por isso essa Europa, velho continente tão orgulhoso das luzes da sua civilização e cultura, quis ceder um pouco da sua claridade, para uma tomada de contacto com as esconsas das civilizações e culturas da África Negra, um tanto entregues à sua marginalidade pessoal, «sombras» que só muito tarde, no princípio deste século, entrariam a iluminar os salões da Europa com a charmosiosa fealdades das suas artes plásticas. É deste facto — da Europa se negar em estabelecer diálogo com a África, reduzir a nada os valores negros, impor a sua civilização e só ela, fazer dos homens negros, homens à sua imagem e semelhança e só à sua imagem e semelhança — nasceu o servilismo, o desenraizado, sem quaisquer tradições autênticas, quer europeias quer africanas. Um tipo de homem, de novo-marginal e transitório que se dilúi na mentalidade europeia, gravitando vagamente ao seus origens africanas. Assim é que a poesia negra mais enraizada no complexo social africano se afigura hoje ao negro de formação europeia, particularmente ao de língua francesa e portuguesa, como um processo longínquo e mesmo incompreensível, mas sua forma linguística nativa.

Entretanto, abre-se um novo caminho de reconquista dos valores perdidos. O negro -africano ocidentalizado, consumidor de civilização bragada-, exprime uma atitude, num movimento formalmente cultural — a «negritude». Agora é o novo negro que surge entre duas guerras, consciente dos problemas da sua particular alienação, a alienação colonial e reivindica o seu lugar nos quadros da vida económica, social e política. Sinceramente interessado na preparação duma síntese de civilizações, dum justo e equilibrado diálogo Europa-África, Leopold Sédar Senghor, poeta do Senegal, fiel representante da negritude, põe o problema: Porque não unir as nossas duas claridades a fim de suprimir todas as sombras! Ou, para empregar uma imagem familiar, porque razão, cultivando o nosso jardim, não enxertar o rebento europeu sobre o nosso rebento selvagem! Virtude das civilizações mestiças...

Mas como essa síntese ainda vem longe, o problema actual reside na conquista duma personalização, numa reabilitação de valores. A poesia do negro ocidentalizado provém duma necessidade imperiosa e angustiante de reencontrar os valores nativos destruídos, necessidade de se readaptar ao seu ambiente, necessidade de gritar a sua presença no mundo. Aimé Césaire não se cansa de afirmar na sua forma poética tão penetrante:

(...) Et nous sommes debout maintenant
mon pays et moi, les chevaux dans le
vent, ma main petite maintenant dans
son poing énorme et la force n'est pas
en nous, mais au-dessus de nous, dans
une voix qui veille la nuit et l'audience
comme la pénétrance d'une guêpe
apocalyptique.
Et la voix prononce que l'Europe nous
a perdues! des siècles gavés de menson-
ges et gonflés de pestilences,
car il n'est point vrai que l'œuvre de
l'homme est finie
que nous n'avons rien à faire au monde
que nous parasitons le monde
qu'il suffit que nous nous mettions au
pas du monde

mais l'œuvre de l'homme vient seule-
ment de commencer
et il reste à l'homme à conquérir toute
interdiction immobilisée aux coins de
sa fervente
et aucune race ne possède le monopole
de la beauté, de l'intelligence, de la
force
et il y a place pour tous au rendez-vous
de la conquête et nous savons mainte-
nant que le soleil tourne autour de
notre terre éclairant la parcelle qu'a
fixée notre volonté seule et que toute
étoile chute le ciel en terre à notre
commandement sans limite.

(CONTINUA NA PÁGINA 2)

The first page of the *Anthology of Black Poetry of Portuguese Expression*, put together by Francisco Tenreiro and Mario de Andrade and published in May 1953.

Art by António Domingues.

Source: Casacomum Archives.

By the mid-1950s, Lisbon was rapidly becoming a dangerous place for anti-colonial activists to live and organize in. Agostinho Neto was in and out of jail for political activism, and the Portuguese police repeatedly disrupted meetings.[74] Cabral decided to return to Cape Verde in 1952, and in the summer of 1954, Andrade moved to Paris. Paris represented in Andrade's mind a great intellectual and political adventure. In

[73] Andrade, "interview with Christine Messiant, » *op.cit.,* p. 199.
[74] Mario Pinto de Andrade, *Uma Entrevista dada a Michel Laban* (Lisboa: Edições João Sá da Costa,1997), p. 108-109

Paris, Andrade hoped, he would be able to speak out against Portuguese colonialism more loudly and freely.[75]

*Paris and the Morocco House at the Cité Universitaire*

In the summer of 1954, when Andrade arrived in Paris, the French Empire was in turmoil. The First Indochina War had just ended. The partisans of King Mohammed V were leading violent riots in Fez and Khenifra. Tunisia was poised to conduct negotiations for its independence. In short, the French Empire was crumbling.[76] Andrade arrived in Paris penniless and, following the recommendation of his friend Marcelino dos Santos, headed straight to Number One Boulevard Jourdan, the Morocco House at the Cité Universitaire. Dos Santos was not there however, and instead Goan Aquino de Bragança welcomed Andrade. They chatted all night, aided by a bottle of port, which Andrade had brought in his meager luggage. Andrade immediately had "the conviction, which was typical of our youth, that something permanent was being created in the relationship."[77] For a few months Bragança and Dos Santos let Andrade sleep clandestinely in their room. In Paris, Andrade widened the circle of influence of the "Cabral Generation," and translated the struggle of the Portuguese colonies to the Paris anti-colonial intellectual scene.

The story of Paris as the center stage for an ebullient debate on the liberated human is not new. The Black Paris Historiography is entirely dedicated to exploring the role of Paris as an anti-colonial metropolis, to examining the connections between Black

[75] *Ibid.*
[76] Ben Salama and Benjamin Stora, *1954, la fin d'un monde colonial*, (Paris : Kuiv Productions, 2014).
[77] Mario de Andrade, interview with Silvia de Bragança *Battles Waged, Lasting Dreams, Aquino de Bragança: the man and his times* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2011), p. 95.

Africans and Black Americans in the Latin Quarter, dissecting the early years of the *négritude* literary movement, and explaining why so many Black Americans found Paris a friendlier place than New York.[78] Still, the importance of the city as a place of encounter between militant-poets from across Africa and the Black Atlantic cannot be understated. Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi described the social scene in post-1945 Paris thus: "they all came through here, brothers and enemies, geniuses and originals of all genres, visionaries and analysts, prophets and architects, generals and popes, and everyone added their poem to dethrone the other poems [...] here we sit at the table, we are brought into the competition, the race of the clocks, the mythical stomach of the Absolute megalopolis. Speak or die!"[79] To Mario de Andrade, Paris was an African capital. "It was in Paris that I felt I was moving to an African rhythm," he told sociologist Christine Messiant in 1982, "to the rhythm of Africa in its entirety, African spread out in its globality—for all the struggles, on all fronts, be they political or cultural, were reverberating in Paris, for there were African parliamentarians, at the time, and there was a cultural movement."[80]

In Paris, Dos Santos, Andrade, and Bragança widened their already important politico-literary education. In permanent contact with writers and thinkers from around

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[78] Tyler Stovall's dissertation *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Lights*, is entirely dedicated to retracing the lives of Black people from across the globe in Paris. In 2008, when Pap Ndiaye published *La Condition Noire: Essai sur une minorité noire* his goal was to initiate a Black studies *à la française*. Citing Stovall and Brent Hayes Edwards at length, Ndiaye delineated a field of study that would trace the history of the Black community in France, but also shed light on ways in which the myth of French colorblindness has silenced the daily discrimination that Black people in France endure. Pap Ndiaye was certainly not the first to call for an in-depth study of the French Black community, but his work, mingling historical enquiry and ethnographic research, has already been hailed as the founding text of French Black studies. More recently, Michael's Goebel's *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* centers on the daily lives of Asian, African, and Latin American migrants to Paris. It was in Paris, Goebels argues, through contact with other Third World Nationalists, that these men and women dreamed up a post-imperial world order.

[79] Abdellatif Laâbi, *L'écorché vif, prosoèmes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986), p. 59.

[80] Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, *op.cit.,* p. 203.

the world, they met Senghor, Césaire, Cheikh Anta Diop, Jean-Paul Sartre, and members of the French Working Class in order to familiarize themselves with the struggles of the European proletariat. They were friendly with the French Communist Party, though most of them never formally joined because their residency in France was already fragile, and because they felt that members of the Communist Party often refused their calls for national and racial solidarity, claiming that this distracted from the Proletarian Revolution.[81] They debated *négritude*, and the decolonization of the mind, they wrote poetry and prose and took part in countless political demonstrations. Andrade participated in the First Congress of Black Writers in 1956 and met poets and militants from across the Francophone and Anglophone worlds. Dos Santos and De Andrade wrote for *Présence Africaine,* through which they made a number of crucial encounters with other radical writers, amongst them Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi, and Algerian poet Jean Sénac one of the first Algerians Andrade met and who became a close friend.[82]

Paris was a crucial base for the creation of the transnational networks of liberation that then blossomed in the Maghreb. A significant number of Maghrebi students and activists lived in Paris, which had not been the case in Lisbon. At *Présence Africaine*, at the Cité Universitaire, and in the cafés of the Latin Quarter, Dos Santos, Andrade, and Bragança mingled and exchanged with these students whose familiar experiences of colonialism inspired similar revolutionary ideals. One of the causes that they were most preoccupied with, Andrade remembered, was the Algerian War of Independence. They felt very close to what was happening in Algeria. "I can't say we were thinking of an

[81] Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, *op.cit.,* p. 208. Aimé Césaire, himself, had a difficult time with the French communist party, where, he claimed, it was difficult to be "nègre," and "Martiniquais."
[82] Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op.cit.,* p. 99. For more on this see chapters 2 and 4.

armed struggle already," recalled Andrade, "but we saw the similarities: a settler-colony, a big European presence."[83] In their minds, they compared the Algerian struggle to their struggle as Angolan and Mozambican people and were inspired.

Thanks to their residing in the Maison du Maroc at the Cité Universitaire, the three men established tight links with the anti-colonial Moroccan community based in France, such as Moroccan nationalist leader Mehdi Ben Barka and other members of the monarchist and anti-colonialist party of the Istiqlal.[84] They participated in anti-colonial protests, sometimes serving as proxies for their Moroccan friends who may have been arrested or interrogated by the French police.[85] Dos Santos remembered:

> There were demonstrations for the return of the King to Morocco. [...] the police invaded the Cité Universitaire, which was forbidden; we demonstrated saying thus: Guillaume assassin, Guillaume assassin. It was General Guillaume who had been placed in Morocco as a big chief of the country. And we were shouting there OUT! Many of our colleagues, Moroccan, would not go out on the road to demonstrate.[86]

Mohammed V, the first king of Morocco, was a source of inspiration amongst many of the young militants from the African continent. His triumphant return to Rabat on November 16th, 1955, and his proclamation of Moroccan independence was filmed and broadcasted across Africa and Europe. To Andrade, Bragança, and Dos Santos, the return of the King would be one of their first victories in their two-decades-long struggle against

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[83] Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, *op.cit.,* p. 205.
[84] Mehdi Ben Barka was a Moroccan anti-colonial activist and member of the Istiqlal party. He participated in the negotiations that led to the return of King Mohamed V, and was the president of the Moroccan assembly from 1956 to 1959. In 1959, he broke from the Istiqlal, arguing that the party was too conservative, and established the Moroccan Union of Popular Forces (UNFP). Ben Barka had studied in Algiers and was always committed to inter-Maghrebi cooperation. In 1963, when the war of the sands broke out, Ben Barka denounced the conflict, and was sentenced to death by King Hassan II. Forced into exile, Ben Barka continued to work as a Third-Wordlist organizer, organizing the Tricontinental conference of Havana in 1966. Just a few months before the conference was due to begin, Ben Barka was kidnapped by members of the French police in Paris and disappeared.
[85] Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op. cit.,* p. 91-92.
[86] Bragança, *Battles Waged, Lasting Dreams, op. cit.,* p. 119.

colonialism. In fact, when the King finally arrived in Morocco and declared it independent, Bragança "immediately jumped to Morocco" remembered Dos Santos.[87] Bragança settled in Rabat in 1957, started writing for the Moroccan journal *Al-Istiqlal*, in addition to his work as personal secretary to Medhi Ben Barka.[88] In Rabat, Bragança started weaving together a net of friends and militants and preparing the groundwork for his two friends to join him a few years later.

Indeed, Dos Santos and Andrade's time in Paris was drawing to a close. While Paris had seemed like a safe haven, by the late-1950s things were becoming increasingly unsafe. In November 1957, the three friends met with Amilcar Cabral in Marcelino dos Santos' apartment, and resolved to create a political organization to fight Portuguese colonialism: the Movimento Anti-Colonial (MAC). Demonstrating the repercussions of the struggles in the Maghreb on these men's minds, the MACs' manifesto opened thus: "The heroic struggle of the people of Algeria is proving that any oppressed African people are able to resist and fight victoriously against the colonist oppressors—and is an example and a fountain of inspiration for the movements of national liberation in Africa and the whole world."[89] Shortly following this meeting, the French police expelled Dos Santos from France. They also interrogated Andrade but, thanks to Alioune Diop and Senghor's interventions, Andrade was not deported. Nevertheless, his name and those of his peers were on a list at the Direction de la Sûreté du Territoire (DST), where they were suspected of being Communists. "Paris was becoming a dangerous place," Andrade

[87] Ibid, p. 120.
[88] Marcelino dos Santos, interview with Silvia Bragança, *Battles Waged, Lasting Dreams, op. cit.*, p. 120 and Mario de Andrade, interview with Bragança, *Battles Waged, Lasting Dreams, op.cit.* p. 98.
[89] Manifesto of the MAC, Department of Information, Propaganda and Culture of the Central Committee of the PAIGC, document number 4 of the Serie Documentos Orientadores, cited in Silvia Bragança, *Battles Waged, Lasting Dreams, op. cit.*, p. 133.

remembered, "not exactly the ideal place to lead a clandestine political organization for the liberation of the Portuguese colonies, at the very moment that France was engaged in the war in Algeria and was an ally of the Portuguese government."[90]

Thus, Paris, the anti-colonial metropolis, became a hotbed for police violence and repression. Militants started looking for other options. In 1959, writers from across the African continent gathered in Rome for the Second Congress of African Writers. There, Andrade met Frantz Fanon for the second time. The two men had met before in 1956 at the First Congress of Black Writers, but by 1959, Fanon no longer worked for the French government, and, in fact, had a number of responsibilities within the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN). He had become the counselor of the provisional government of Algeria and he was responsible for enlarging the FLN's anti-imperialist camp to Angolan and Mozambican militants. Fanon explained to Andrade that the FLN had the means to provide military training for young activists from Angola and Mozambique; the FLN would gladly welcome them in Tunisia, in one of its bases.[91]

This meeting with Fanon and the example that Algeria had set defined the path forward for the colonized intellectual, explained Andrade. Fanon's contribution to the Congress was entitled "Fondements réciproques de la culture nationale et de la lutte de libération" [Reciprocal Foundation for National Culture and the Struggle for Liberation]. For the first time, Andrade remembered, Fanon revealed to an African and international public the "revolutionary mutation from cultural discourse to armed struggle for national liberation."[92] In fact, explained Andrade, this idea was missing from the previous

[90] Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op. cit.,* p. 118.
[91] Mario de Andrade, *Uma Entrevista, op. cit.,* p. 150-1.
[92] Mario de Andrade, "Literatura e Nacionalismo em Angola," in Inocencia Mata and Laura Padhila, *Mario Pinto de Andrade: Um Intelectual na Politica*, (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2000), p. 22.

generation of African intellectual's idea of the cultural problem. Only in 1959, when Fanon gave his remarks in Rome, did Andrade and his peers understand that struggling for the universal recognition of Black value was obsolete. Andrade, who had been an avid reader of Senghor and Césaire, understood now that *négritude*'s power had been drained.

On a more personal level, meeting Fanon and hearing his remarks at the symposium, had a profound impact on Andrade's vision of the future. "This meeting with Fanon reinforced in each one of us an important decision," explained Andrade, "We had to go back to Africa. We couldn't stay spread-out all over Europe, Europe was a middle-passage for Africa."[93] To Andrade, the Middle-passage was a process of self-creation; having acquired a sharp political consciousness in Lisbon and Paris, he was ready to return to Africa, and to start the Maghreb Generation.[94] According to Andrade, at the end of 1959, Cabral also declared: "Enough with Europe, children, to Africa one and all!"[95]

[93] Andrade, "Mémoires d'une aventure intellectuelle," *op. cit.,* p. 123.
[94] Traditionally scholars have thought of the Middle-Passage as the physical crossing of the Atlantic, but this obscures the "Middle-Passages" that slaves who crossed the Sahara, or stayed on the African continent, had to endure. In reality the "Middle Passage" refers to a series of passages leading the slave further and further from home, further and further from the familiar. The Middle Passages are a journey through space, but also a psychological, physical, and social journey from captive to enslaved; it is a sickening but meaningful journey from the familiar to the strange to the magical. "Through their dramatic and varying languages of travel and alienation," writes Larson, "captives remembered their horrid journeying as both painful and meaningful. By vividly and richly describing estrangement, they simultaneously imagined their specific continental homes and confirmed their sense of precaptive placement." [Larson, Pier M., "Horrid Journeying: Narratives of Enslavement and the Global African Diaspora," *Journal of World History,* Vol. 19, No. 4, (December 2008), pp. 431-464, p. 434]. It is through the process of progressive estrangement that slaves construct a narrative about their free-selves and about their original habitat. This estrangement makes them slaves, but it also makes them Africans. Here Mario de Andrade uses the term "Middle-Passage" in a figurative sense, not only as a physical crossing, but also as a painful process in the creation of his identity.
[95] Andrade, interview with Christine Messiant, *op. cit.,* p. 214.

**Back to Africa: The birth of the Maghreb Generation in Morocco (1956-1963)**

*The Creation of the Conference of Nationalist Organization of the Portuguese Colonies*

In January 1960, militants from five of the Portuguese colonies met at the Conference of African People and decided to establish a more inclusive and permanent office for the Liberation of the Portuguese Colonies. Bragança's presence in Morocco made Rabat the obvious choice. In April 1961, the Conference of the Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) arranged, with the Moroccan government's assistance, a Conference in Casablanca.[96] This symposium brought together the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), and the Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe (MLSTP*)* in an effort to condemn Portuguese colonialism and call for support from the already independent African nations.[97] The conference lured two more Lusophone militants to Rabat: Amália Fonseca of the PAIGC, and poet Marcelino dos Santos representing the MPLA. Fonseca, the only woman of the group, preformed the secretarial duties, sending and receiving telegrams, and had the particularly useful qualifications of

[96] Not to be confused with the better-known Casablanca Conference. In January 1961, the first king of independent Morocco, Mohammed V, inspired by his encounter with Patrice Lumumba, brought together the hardliners and stars of the nascent institutional Pan-Africanist ideology (Algerian Ferhat Abbas, Malian Modibo Keita, Egyptian Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ghanaian Kwame Nkrumah, and Guinean Ahmed Sékou Touré) for the Conference of Casablanca. The Conference's stated-goal was to eliminate racial segregation, as well as liquidate the colonial regimes across Africa. The participants stood firmly behind Algeria and the Congo in their struggles for independence and called for inter-African cooperation. [Zerbo, Yacouba. « La problématique de l'unité africaine. (1958-1963) », *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 212, no. 4, (2003), pp. 113-127; Brahim El Guabli, "Refiguring Pan-Africanism Through Algerian–Moroccan Competitive Festivals," *Interventions*, July 11 2018, DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2018.1487327. Ahmed Balafrej, "La charte de Casablanca et l'unité africaine," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1962, pp. 11-12.]

[97] African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde or Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde, (PAIGC); People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola or Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA); Mozambique Liberation Front or Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO); Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe or Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe (MLSTP*)*

being able "to write and type, in Portuguese, English, and French."[98] Mario Pinto de Andrade was elected president of the CONCP and started regularly traveling back and forth between Conakry and Rabat. He eventually moved to Rabat in 1963 with his wife, filmmaker Sarah Maldoror, and their two daughters.[99]

From left to right: Rabat Kesha (ANC), Marcelino dos Santos (CONCP, FRELIMO), Amália Fonseca (CONCP, PAIGC), Nelson Mandela (ANC), Mario Pinto de Andrade (CONCP, MPLA), and Aquino de Bragança (CONCP) in Rabat in March 1962.

Source: Casa Comum Archives

The militants of the CONCP did not choose Morocco randomly. Morocco was strategically located close to Portugal—an easy transit center between the African continent and Europe. Andrade, Dos Santos, and Bragança had waged their first political battles at the Paris Cité Universitaire; Morocco thus was an appealing place, a symbol of political victory and of their hopes for the future of the Portuguese colonies. On the practical level, many of their old comrades of the Morocco House now held important positions in the Moroccan government and could help them obtain military and financial

[98] Letter from Marcelino dos Santos to Aristides Pereira, September 1961, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04604.023.039. Amalia Fonseca figures in between the lines of the Casa Comum Archives. She is the recipient and sender of much of the mail, but rarely appears as an activist in her own right. I have not been able to find much biographical information about her.

[99] Anouchka de Andrade, interview with author, July 17th, 2018, Saint-Denis, France; Henda de Andrade, interview with author, July 28th, 2018, Saint-Denis, France.

support. Morocco's help did not come freely however. According to Mario de Andrade, the Moroccan government requested the liberation groups' support for the Moroccan demand on the Mauritanian territory—a support which they gave only reluctantly, afraid that it would seem like they were condemning another member country of the UN.[100]

The creation of the CONCP was an illustration of the type of political organization that Dos Santos, Andrade, Cabral, Neto and their peers had yearned for. While the CONCP consisted of a collection of nationalist organizations, its primary cause was to unify the African masses in order to defeat Portuguese colonialism. This unity, the CONCP argued, would "be forged in direct action against colonialism."[101] The CONCP published individual resolutions for each country, but also provided a game-plan for liquidating Portuguese colonialism on all fronts at once. Appealing for funds from all African countries, the CONCP set itself as a strategic pole through which funds would be distributed to the various national conflicts. Again, though the members of the CONCP knew the necessity of national organizations, they also knew that Portuguese colonialism could never be defeated if the people under its yolk did not unite. Nor did they find nationalism to be a particularly appealing solution for the long-term. In a speech in front of the second meeting of the Union of Black African Students, held in Rabat in August 1963, Cabral explained to the young African students that they were divided. "Why?" he

[100] Mario de Andrade, interview with Silvia Bragança, *Battles Waged, Lasting Dreams, op. cit.,* p. 99. One reason to choose Morocco over Tunisia was Habib Bourguibas' government show of support for Robert Holden's party the National Liberation Front of Angola (FLNA). The MPLA and FLNA were warring for the control of the anti-colonialist movement. Based in eastern Angola, Robert Holden's party drew support from the United States and Israel. The MPLA's allegiances were communist, however, and they received support from the Soviet Union. See: Arslam Humbaraci "Le Plan Khatib," *Jeune Afrique*, January 23 1962, Tunis.

[101] "Le Mouvement de Libération Nationale dans les Colonies Portugaises," Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas, 1965, Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Fundação Mário Soares, p. 2, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04322.005.005#!1.

asked, “because some of you want your actions in foreign lands to be organic, and others want national unions, be they created in Parisian cafés or the cold streets of Moscow.” The reality, claimed Cabral, is that they would be stronger if they were united, “if you hold hands solidly, in our fight against Portuguese colonialism and for progress.”[102]

The choice of Morocco demonstrated the transnational predilection of the CONCP’s members. Practically every speech pronounced at the CONCP’s Casablanca Conference pointed to the similarities between the Moroccan people and the people under Portuguese colonial rule. As the representative of the *Moroccan Mouvement Populaire*, Mohamed Darbani, noted “it is a happy omen that this conference is being held at the very place where Portuguese colonialism was so badly defeated,” for, he explained, “the Moroccan people were the first to fight against Portuguese colonialism.”[103] The CONCP was eager to make its case to the world, and to the Moroccan people in particular. Most speeches were delivered in French, and when a delegate could not speak French, they regretted it. “Unfortunately, the 50 hours I have spent in [Morocco] are not enough for me to be able to speak to you in Arabic or in French,” apologized Adelino Gwambo, president of the Democratic National Union of Mozambique.[104]

*The Luso-Africans settle in Rabat*

In Rabat, Dos Santos, Andrade, and Bragança reunited and worked in concert to kindle international support for the CONCP. After Paris, Rabat became the new center of

[102] Amilcar Cabral, “Mensagem ao II Congresso da UGEAN,” August 1963, Rabat, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, p. 3, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04602.029#!1.
[103] Mohamed Darbani, Conférence des Organisations Nationalistes des Colonies Portugaises, (Rabat: CONCP, 1961), p. 49, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04357.009.001#!1.
[104] Adelino Gwambo, Conférence des Organisations Nationalistes des Colonies Portugaises, (Rabat: CONCP, 1961), p. 29, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04357.009.001#!1.

Pan-African intellectual and cultural life. Rabat, however, had one advantage over Paris: it was not the metropole of a colonial empire, but a liberated, African city. The streets of Rabat in the early 1960s, remembered Abdellatif Laâbi's wife, Jocelyne Laâbi, were alive with the dreams of the students sitting in cafes and restaurants drinking Stork Beer and talking about the revolution; "it was the time of Sékou Touré and Nkrumah, of the struggles against the Portuguese colonizer, the last to cling to a bygone era."[105] The bubbling energy that had animated these young militant-poets in Paris was able to overflow in Rabat, where they were no longer dependent on "French hospitality" and where the Moroccan government gave them all the fixings of a budding state: money, legitimacy, weapons, and military training. In Rabat, Dos Santos, Andrade, and their peers were no longer students in the colonial capitals, they were spokesmen of their own states, they were the representatives of their people on the international stage. While in Paris and Lisbon the militant-poets had merely been able to discuss their radical ideas, in Rabat they found the actual material means to carry them out. The return to the African continent, to an African city hub, made it possible for them to lead and train other militants, and to broader the ranks of the Maghreb Generation. As Mario de Andrade acknowledged in a Rabat press conference, by December 1961, Morocco had become the "plaque tournante" [nerve-center] of the nationalists from the Portuguese colonies, providing room and board as well as military training to dozens of young men from the Portuguese colonies."[106]

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[105] Jocelyne Laâbi, *La Liqueur d'Aloès* (Paris: Différence, 2005), p. 123.

[106] Bulletin d'Informations, *op.cit.,* and "Mohammed V et L'Afrique - Témoignage" - Testemunho de Mario Pinto de Andrade sobre Mohamed V, November 5 1987, Fundo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04357.009.002#!3.

Immediately after the Conference in Casablanca, at the end of April 1961, Marcelino dos Santos wrote to King Hassan II thanking him for his aid in organizing the conference, a "support which will forever stay engraved in the memory of our children."[107] Counting on Hassan II's continued support, Dos Santos asked if the King could provide a monthly stipend of 5000 Dirham for an office, a residence for the General Secretary, and general office supplies, as well as Moroccan passports for the militants who would need them. Dos Santos also requested money for publishing brochures about the CONCP in English, French, Arabic, and Portuguese, as well as access to the Moroccan Radio in order to broadcast the CONCP's call to arms to Moroccan, African, and European audiences.

A couple of months later, in a June 1961 letter to Joao Cabral, the Assistant Secretary General of the CONCP, Dos Santos explained that henceforth any refugee of a Portuguese colony was welcome in Morocco: "They will only have to declare that they are political refugees of the Portuguese colonies!"[108] Dos Santos complained, however, that the Moroccan government had still not approved the money for the CONCP brochure, or access to the Moroccan Radio. He hoped these issues would be fixed soon. "Incha Allah," he idiomatically ended his letter. Through his usage of this classic Arabic expression—an invocation of God—Dos Santos demonstrated the imprint of his stay in Morocco.[109]

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[107] Marcelino dos Santos, "Letter to his Majesty Hassan II," Rabat, April 27 1961, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04623.158.004#!1.
[108] Marcelino dos Santos, "Letter to Joao Cabral," June 11 1961, Rabat, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04604.023.011. For information on Joao Cabral see: Tor Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Formation of a Popular Opinion (1950-1970)*, (Uppsala" Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999), p. 385
[109] *Ibid.* In his 1958 Antología da poesía de expressão portuguesa, Andrade concluded his introductory remarks with a similar usage of the phrase "Incha Allah," demonstrating that even before moving to Rabat,

Dos Santos did not limit his call for support to the Moroccan government, however. He also petitioned various Moroccan political parties and syndicates for money, appealing to their sense of Pan-African brotherhood.[110] The *Union Marocaine du Travail* (UMT), Moroccan Workers' Union, was particularly supportive. In February 1960, MPLA member Lucio Lara wrote to Amilcar Cabral, or Abel Djassi as his clandestine name was, assuring him that their Moroccan friends had kept their promises, and that Lara and his friends were comfortably settled in the UMT house. Lara vowed that he was certain that the Moroccan labor unions would support Cabral's cause, for they are "men of action, who don't waste much time on vague things, like so many of the political organizations that we know."[111] Cabral, who was travelling in and out of Morocco on a regular basis, was apparently always housed in the UMT headquarters.[112] The UMT's journal published articles and reports in Arabic, French, and Portuguese from the various nationalist organizations.[113] When, a few years later, the CONCP's relationship with the Moroccan government deteriorated, members of these unions continued to support the liberation groups.[114]

By December 1961, Dos Santos' problems were resolved. He had received money from the Moroccan government and the CONCP was able to both print out a regular bulletin and make pronouncements on the Moroccan Radio. The bulletin informed

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his contact with Moroccans and Algerians at the Paris Cité Universitaire inflected his language. [Mario de Andrade, Antología da poesía negra de expressão portuguesa, (Paris: Pierre Jean Oswald, 1958).]

[110] Letter from Marcelino dos Santos to Mario de Andrade, May 17th 1961, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04604.023.002#!2.

[111] Letter from Lucio Lara to Abel Djassi, February 21st 1960, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07196.154.026#!1.

[112] Marc Ollivier, Interview with author, May 3rd 2018, Paris, France.

[113] Letter from Luis Cabral to Abel Djassi (Amilcar Cabral), 7th of February 1960, Casablanca, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07196.154.023.

[114] Zakya Daoud, email interview with author, February 11, 2018 and Boubker Mongachi, interview with author, February 12th, 2018, Casablanca, Morocco.

readers on the happenings in the Portuguese colonies and demonstrated the CONCP's support for other liberation struggles, such as that of the Algerian people. This publication, written in French, addressed the Portuguese subjects, and the Moroccan people as "Moroccan brothers."[115]

Along with the ability to broadcast their message, the CONCP received military assistance from the Moroccan army. According to the first commander of the *Exército Popular de Libertação de Angola*, the first contingent of eighty MPLA fighters trained in Morocco—fighters who constituted the "embryo" of the guerilla. They took the oath of service in Rabat, in the presence of Agostinho Neto and Mario Pinto de Andrade. A number of other guerilla members trained in three different camps across Morocco and went on to become generals and leading members of the liberation movements.[116] Cabral organized the training of a number of guerilla members in Morocco. In spring 1962, he headed a contingent of about twenty Guineans to Morocco. The men's military schooling was extensive, and included exercises in sabotage, acts of terrorism, ways of setting traps, and ways of avoiding capture (through the use of women and domestic workers).[117] These "estagiarios," were provided everything they could need, Dos Santos assured Cabral, even cigarettes.[118] Not only did the Moroccan government provide provisions to trainees in Morocco, they also shipped supplies to freedom-fighters in the Portuguese colonies. On January 29th, 1963, the *Indus*, hailing from Casablanca, arrived in the port

[115] Bulletin d'Informations du Secrétariat Permanent de la Conférence des Organisations Nationalistes des Colonies Portugaises, Number 1, Rabat, December 30, 1961, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=02603.016#!1.
[116] Minervina Celeste Fortunato, *Assises Maroc-Afrique*, February 18-19, 2018, Rabat, Morocco.
[117] Programa da formação técnica e militar dos estagiários do PAIGC em Marrocos, March 10, 1962, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07068.098.017#!3.
[118] Letter from Marcelino dos Santos to Amilcar Cabral, Rabat, March 16th,1962, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07068.098.017#!3.

of Conakry carrying in its hull 1380 boxes of milk, 490 boxes of sardines, one table, one stool, and one old couch, all destined to the fighters in Guinea-Bissau.[119]


Amilcar Cabral with a group of young militants of the PAIGC receiving military training in Morocco.

February 1962.

Source: Casa Comum Archives

While the Moroccan government had clearly responded to Dos Santos' request to assist the Lusophone militants, over the course of the early 1960s, Moroccan support grew increasingly tepid. Particularly revealing of this trend is a series of exchanges following Marcelino dos Santos' visit to Rabat in July 1963. By 1963 Dos Santos had made the move out of Rabat but came back regularly in his function as general secretary of the CONCP. In Rabat on July 1st, 1963, in front of representatives from Black African embassies, Algeria, and China, Dos Santos thanked the Moroccan people, king, and government not only for their moral support but also for their assistance in money and arms.[120] This speech, reported by a few liberal French journalists, worried members of the French Embassy in Morocco. Jacques Tiné, the French Chargé d'Affaires of the

[119]Letter from Aristides Pereira to the Director of the Port of Conakry, April 1963, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07073.130.005#!2

[120] Letter from Jaques Tiné to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, Rabat, July 6, 1963, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, immediately asked M. Zentar, the Director of Political Affairs at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about Dos Santos's allusions to the Moroccan help in armament. Zentar told Tiné that he had no idea what Dos Santos was talking about, and that official Moroccan services had no knowledge of these deliveries. He also reminded Tiné that there were no longer any training camps for Angolan nationalists in Morocco; they had all been transferred to Algeria. Tiné, perhaps in an attempt to reassure his superiors in the French administration, noted that Zentar seemed critical of the attitude of Algeria's president, Ahmed Ben Bella, at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Addis Ababa in May 1963. Zentar had apparently complained that Ben Bella muddled his past as a freedom fighter and agitator with his present as a head of state, and that "he smelled too much of [gun] powder."[121] The French were worried that Morocco would side with Algeria and support anti-neocolonialist struggles around the world. Nevertheless, Zentar's attitude towards Ben Bella reassured the French administration, convincing them that Moroccan officials were less ideologically inclined than their Algerian counterparts.

Similarly, in a letter dated June 1963, Pierre de Leusse, the French Ambassador to Morocco, seemingly determined to reassure the French government, claimed that the Moroccan press coverage of Agostinho Neto's passage in Morocco was merely white noise. Agostinho Neto, then president of the MPLA, had escaped Portuguese prison by jumping a boat to Tangiers.[122] In June 1963, he was back in Morocco to celebrate the second anniversary of the Luanda uprising in the country that, he claimed, had been the

[121] Letter from Jaques Tiné to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, Rabat, July 6, 1963, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.
[122] Bragança, *Battles Waged, Lasting Dream, op.cit.*, p. 164; Martins Helder, *Porque Sakrani?* (Maputo: Editorial Terceiro Milenio, 2001).

most dedicated to the Angolan plight. In his correspondence with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, De Leusse insisted however that Neto's visit was of little interest to most Moroccans, despite the Moroccan journal *Nation Africaine*'s claim that "every Moroccan citizen feels concerned with this cause and ideal."[123]

In spite of France's determination to see Morocco as an ally, and a less radical partner than the neighboring Algeria, and despite Morocco's efforts to conceal their support to the Luso-African militant groups, the French administration could not completely deny that the Moroccan government was involved in some suspicious business. A number of confidential exchanges from the early 1960s report French confusion as to what the Moroccans were up to. Some investigation was necessary: an August 1962 letter from the French Consul, Albert Roux, revealed that there was indeed a camp for "soldats de couleur" in Ksiba, soldiers of uncertain origin.[124]A confidential letter from Jacques Tiné to the French Foreign Affairs Minister dated September 8, 1962 noted that the Moroccan government had welcomed sixteen Angolan students, collected from a boat off the coast of Casablanca. These students claimed that Portuguese Prime-Minister Salazar's police were determined to arrest them due to their affiliations with the Angolan liberation movement and that they had escaped just at the moment of capture. Tiné included a list of names, birthdates and marital status.[125] A confidential letter by members of the French embassy to the Portuguese embassy in Morocco, dated September 21st, 1962, reported that 40 tons of armament intended for the MPLA were sitting in the

[123] Letter from Pierre de Leusse to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, Rabat, 1963, p. 7, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.
[124] A letter from Albert Roux to the Minister Conseiller Chargé d'Affaires in Rabat, August 2 1962, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.
[125] Letter from Jaques Tiné to Colonel Duprez, Rabat, September 8th, 1962, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.

port of Casablanca, and that this was certainly just the tip of the iceberg: Morocco was probably at the crux of an arms trafficking ring serving Kenya, and Angola.[126] The French Embassy in Dar Es Salaam informed the French Foreign Minister that Morocco had welcomed 300 militants of the FRELIMO for guerilla training, 86 of which had already received training from the Moroccan government.[127]

French administrators such as De Leusse and Tiné had clearly been in denial of the extent of Morocco's involvement in the training and assisting of anti-Portuguese liberation movements. Moroccan officials were also increasingly unwilling to acknowledge Moroccan support to African liberation movements, feigning ignorance when questioned by their French colleagues. A change in policy brought on by Mohammed V's death in February 1961 and his pro-Western son, Hassan II's ascent to power, tempered Morocco's radical and pro-Eastern rhetoric. Moroccan officials did not hesitate to criticize their Algerian peers, hoping to endear themselves to a French administration still wounded by Algeria's War of Independence. Morocco no longer touted its position as a "plaque tournante" for pieds-rouges, and indeed by 1966, Aquino de Bragança, Marcelino do Santos, and Mario de Andrade had all deserted Rabat for Algiers.

**Conclusion: The Maghreb Generation extends to Algiers**

Aquino de Bragança was convinced that Algeria was to become the new revolutionary hotspot. The leaders in Rabat were unhappy with this change of

[126] The French Embassy in a letter to the Portuguese Embassy, Rabat, September 21, 1962, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.
[127] Letter from A. Deschamps, Chargé d'Affaires of Tanganyika to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dar Es Salaam, January 12th, 1963, 558/PO/1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.

allegiances, according to Mario de Andrade, particularly when the rumor spread that Angolans and Mozambicans were fighting on the Algerian side in the 1963 War of the Sands, a series of desert skirmishes on the border between Algeria and Morocco.[128] While these rumors were later disproven, the Moroccan government ended up cutting off any direct aid to the Luso-African liberation movements, despite having been their first and most important source of financial, material, and military support.[129] However, Andrade noted, this did not mean that the Moroccan government, or the Moroccan people, did not endorse the movements' actions. The end of the financial subsidies had less to do with the liberation movements, and more to do with growing tensions and competition between Morocco and Algeria and the looming Western-Sahara conflict. Amilcar Cabral wrote to King Hassan II in 1963, at the end of the War of the Sands, expressing his joy at the fact that the conflict was resolved between Morocco and Algeria and emphasizing the importance of a peaceful, brotherly, relationship between the two Maghrebi countries for all the liberation struggles in Africa and for African unity.[130]

If the leaders in Rabat were unhappy with the Luso-Africans' strong allegiance to the Algerians, the Luso-Africans were increasingly discontent with a Moroccan government which was steadily sliding into a repressive regime. Early on, in 1961, a political crisis caused by a disagreement between the Minister of African Affairs, Abdelkrim Khatib, and King Hassan II, had paralyzed the workings of the CONCP in Rabat. Dos Santos expressed worry and eagerness for the crisis to resolve, since it was

[128] See footnote fifty-four for more on War of Sands.
[129] Mario Pinto de Andrade, *Uma Entrevista, op.cit.,* p. 186.
[130] Amilcar Cabral, "Telegram to Hassan II," 1963, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07075.144.050.

blocking the arrival of a new boat-load of trainees from Conakry.[131] In 1963, Mehdi Ben Barka, Hassan II's primary political opponent, sent Cabral two letters in relation to the trial of 103 members of the Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (UNFP). In the letters, Ben Barka, denounced the "feudal-neocolonialist Moroccan royalty," which, left unchecked, could have dire consequences for the entire African continent.[132] "We reaffirm the message of solidarity of the Afro-Asiatic people against this cruel and pernicious form of neocolonialism, which empties our independences of their true meaning, to perpetuate instead capitalist interests, and our exploitation at the hands of foreigners, with the help of a handful of Moroccan turncoats," read the resolution of the Afro-Asiatic Solidarity Committee which Barka included in his plea.[133] Though it is unclear whether Cabral ever answered these letters (on one of the letters he wrote "I received this late, it would be difficult for me to [...] respond"), it is clear that Ben Barka had developed a relationship with the members of the CONCP based in Rabat, and was counting on their support. When Andrade moved out of Rabat in 1966, it had been just a year since the March 1965 Casablanca protests, during which the Moroccan police killed up to a thousand protesters, the majority of whom were students. That same year of 1965, Mehdi Ben Barka disappeared in Paris. These two events inaugurated a period which many scholars have since called the Lead Years, a period of roughly twenty years during which the Moroccan government deployed violence and repression against all forms of dissent.

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[131] Marcelino dos Santos, "Letter to Aristides Pereira," August 2nd,1961, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04604.039.024#!1

[132] Letter from Mehdi Ben Barka to Amilcar Cabral, December 14th, 1963, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, p. 3, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04621.115.028#!3

[133] Resolução de 12 de Setembro de 1963 do Comité Executivo do Movimento de Solidariedade dos Povos Afro-Asiáticos, Fundo Amilcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, p. 3, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04621.115.024#!2.

Despite their move to Algiers, the Luso-African militants did not break contact with their Moroccan friends and fellow activists. Mario de Andrade and Marcelino dos Santos in particular continued to travel to Morocco on a regular basis, and all the militant-artists convened for the Pan-African Festival of Algiers in July 1969.[134] Andrade continued to use his Moroccan passport until 1966, and kept strong ties with many Moroccan friends, including young Moroccan poet and militant Abdellatif Laâbi and members of the Moroccan labor unions such as Moroccan journalist Zakya Daoud, founder of the Moroccan journal *Lamalif*.[135]

More important still than the individual relationships knitting the Moroccans to the Mozambicans, was the precedent people like Dos Santos, Cabral, and Andrade set: resistance to imperialism, colonialism or neocolonialism had to be organized transnationally and had to be cultural, as well as military. A previous generation of Black poets had used poetry as a form of self-assertion, as a means to regain a sense of dignity, as a way of claiming the colonizer's language, and, as Senghor put it, to bring the Black man into the "universal civilization."[136] But these Luso-African poet-politicians took *négritude*'s battles one step further. They did not intend to limit their poetry to delineating their identity; instead, they hoped to create a new identity. With poetry, they planned to overhaul the universal, not join it. They were interested in the aesthetic only as long as it had an impact on the practical and the military. Poetry would work in the service of liberty and true decolonization, not as a tool of national unification deployed

[134] For more see chapter 3.
[135] Mario Pinto de Andrade's passport, Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=04359.006.006. Zakya Daoud, email interview with author, February 11th, 2018.
[136] See Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Négritude et Civilisation de l'Universel," *Présence Africaine*, Number 46, (Second Trimester 1963), pp. 8-13.

by new African governments. It was in this dual capacity, as militants and poets, that they inspired an entire generation of Moroccan poets, disillusioned with the poetry of their forefathers, to take a political stance and shape the conversation about Pan-Africanism and world-revolution well beyond Morocco. It is this vision that inspired the birth of journals such as the Moroccan literary magazine *Souffles*.

## Chapter 2. "A continent in its totality and beyond:" *Souffles* and the Luso-Africans

*"Je me retourne. Un continent. Je le vois dans sa totalité et au-delà. Mis à sac, vide. Des oiseaux pétrifiés. Aucune trace, vie. Comme au commencement."*[137]

*"I turn around. A continent. I see it in its totality and beyond. Looted, empty. Petrified birds. No trace, life. As in the beginning."*

- Abdellatif Laâbi, 2003

### Introduction

In March 1966, in Rabat, a group of Moroccan poets and artists, avid readers of Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, discontent with the possibilities that the Moroccan artistic institutions had to offer, started to print a thousand copies of their own zine, a 30-some pager with very limited distribution. The journal, entitled *Souffles*, was a little booklet filled with audacious new poetry, manifestos, and thought pieces. *Souffles* sported a minimalist cover designed by Moroccan painter Mohammed Melehi, a black circle described by art historian and former member of the *Souffles* team, Toni Maraini, as the "Black sun of Renewal."[138] Inspired by poets Abdellatif Laâbi, Mostapha Nissabouri, and Mohammed Khair-Eddine's encounter with Melehi, the *Souffles* team included a number of Moroccans, all young and decidedly committed to a new world.[139] They were poets, painters, and filmmakers, but above all, they were friends, and the lack

[137] Abdellatif Laâbi, *L'oeil et la nuit* (Paris: La différence, 2003), p. 9.
[138] Toni Maraini, "Black Sun of Renewal," *Springerin*, 12.4, 2006, pp. 32-35. Toni Maraini was one of the only women who participated in the *Souffles* team. Married to the painter Mohamed Melehi, she was an Italian art history Professor, who had moved to Casablanca to teach at the Casablanca Fine Arts School. In an interview with scholar Kenza Sefraoui, Maraini commented on being the only woman in the *Souffles* group, other than Jocelyne Laâbi, Abdellatif Laâbi's wife who was responsible for most of the logistical aspects of the journal. "It is true that in Morocco, I sometimes wrote texts without signing them [...] and this was either because I was transcribing discussions that we had had *as a group*, or because, as a foreign woman, it was better to merge with the group." [Toni Maraini, cited in *La Revue Souffles, 1966-1973: Espoirs de Révolution Culturelle au Maroc*, (Rabat: Éditions du Sirocco, 2013), p. 372.]
[139] Mostapha Nissabouri, interview with author, February 13th, 2018, Casablanca, Morocco.

of hierarchy within the journal was an illustration of this friendship. *Souffles* was like a family, remembered Tahar Ben Jelloun, whose first published poem, "L'aube des dalles," appeared in the journal's twelfth issue in 1968.[140] Soon the editorial board grew to include artists from all over Morocco, Algeria, Africa, and the world, and started sending the journal to subscribers in France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the United States.[141]

*Souffles* was a call to arms. At the core of *Souffles'* mission was the belief that decolonization was not finished, and that continued vigilance was necessary in order to combat neocolonialism and truly achieve political and cultural independence. "The immense majority of formerly colonized peoples have not yet regained a sense of self, of their existential sovereignty, of their right to speak," wrote Laâbi in 1967, "And most of their intellectuals (who are the peoples' spokesmen), who think of themselves as free, are actually unknowingly fighting with very subtle forms of alienation."[142] Inspired by Fanon's words and much like their Luso-African peers, the *Souffles* group was breaking from an earlier generation of Third-World intellectuals—those intellectuals who had found their voice in Paris or Lisbon, those for whom the Bible was still "Socrates-Aristotle and Marx-Lenine-Sartre."[143] Those who, just as they were supposedly speaking out fiercely for the Third-World, were so inspired by European humanism and universalism that they constantly sought out European approval.[144] The writers in *Souffles* no longer wanted to be introduced by European intellectuals, in fact Europeans were no longer their interlocutors, the Maghreb Generation was. Much like when Andrade,

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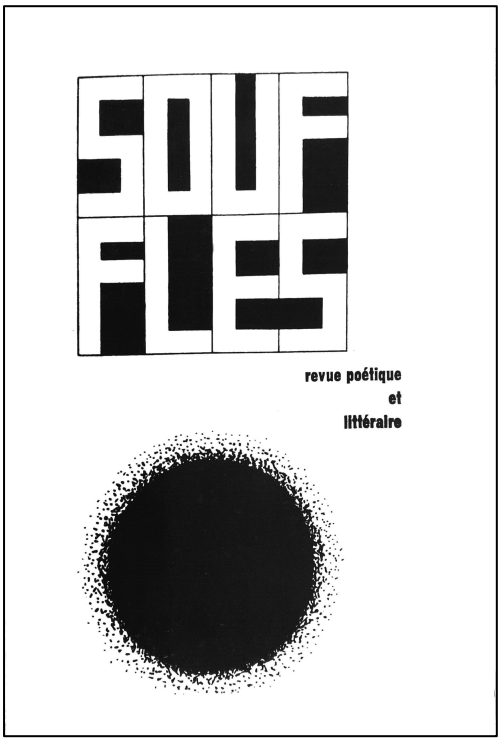
[140] Tahar ben Jelloun, interview with Kenza Sefraoui, September 13th 2004, Paris, in Sefraoui, *La Revue Souffles, op.cit.*, p. 322.
[141] *Ibid.,* p. 40.
[142] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Réalités et dilemmes de la culture nationale (II)," *Souffles*, Number 6, (Second trimester 1967), p. 33.
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] *Ibid.*

Cabral, Dos Santos, and Bragança forsook Europe for Morocco, the members of *Souffles* turned away from Europe and its abstract humanism "injected in strong doses in the culture of the former colonizer,"[145] and chose "extremism." Extremism, or jihadism as Laâbi called it, was "a refusal of contingencies and easy friendships, a permanent anxiety of being, to be complete without artificial or spare limbs."[146] Extremism meant becoming a poet of the people, and refusing easy friendships with the Moroccan intellectual or political elite.[147]




The first issue of *Souffles* with Mohamed Melehi's "Black Sun of Renewal."

First Trimester 1966.

The first part of this chapter explores the similarities (and differences) in *Souffles* and the Luso-African's ideologies and visions for the future of Africa. Andrade, Laâbi, Nissabouri, Ben Jelloun, and Dos Santos read the same texts, were moved in similar ways

[145] *Ibid.*
[146] *Ibid.*
[147] Though, at first, Laâbi meant "extremism" as literary or linguistic extremism, he did also condone other types of extremism, as he argued, much like Fanon, that these were the only ways to topple colonialism and neocolonialism.

by those texts, and articulated an analogous vision of African modernity and liberation, not only as a fruit of cultural discourse but also as a result of concrete participation in the international networks that supported revolution. Confronted with the tenets of *négritude* and those of Frantz Fanon, the two groups fell on the same side of the ideological struggles of the 1960s and '70s – they chose to join the race of the revolutionaries, the Maghreb Generation.

The second part of this chapter reveals the contacts between the two groups over the course of the journal's tenure and beyond. Indeed, the revolutionary and Pan-African bent *Souffles* took in its last three years, I argue, was largely due to the editorial board's encounter with intellectuals and militants from the Lusophone world, intellectuals such as Mario de Andrade, Amilcar Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, Agostinho Neto, and Aquino de Bragança.[148] Abdellatif Laâbi, who had met them in the early 1960s in Rabat, maintained strong ties with poets from the Lusophone world, and started including their work in the spring of 1968.[149] In the very last issue of *Souffles*, however, the editors of the journal decided to reorient their revolutionary focus away from Africa and towards the Middle East. This final shift was largely a response to the growing Palestinian problem, and the sense of popular Pan-Arab identity that emerged from it.

### *Souffles* and the Pan-African Philosophers

From the beginning, *Souffles* adopted a transnational perspective. "Something is brewing in Africa," wrote Laâbi in his 1966 manifesto-prologue. "*Souffles* does not limit itself to one niche or minaret, nor does it recognize any borders, our Maghrebi, African,

[148] Serhat Karakayali, *Une Saison Ardente: Souffles, 50 ans après* (Casablanca: Éditions du Sirocco, 2017).
[149] See issue on the Cultural Congress of Havana, *Souffles*, number 9, (first trimester 1968).

European and other friends are all invited to participate in our modest enterprise," urged Laâbi.[150] The journal started as a literary magazine dedicated to finding a place for young Moroccan voices. But as 1966 turned into '67, and in particular after the 1967 Six-Day-War between Israel and its neighbors, the journal took on an increasingly political bent. The world around *Souffles* seemed ready to change, to decolonize; Cuba and Algeria had led successful and widely broadcasted revolutions, the Vietnam War was inspiring anti-capitalist movements around the world, and the Palestinian freedom movement was riling up support across Africa and the Arab world.

At the same time, the national milieu where *Souffles* idealists operated was quickly shifting. The monarchy in Morocco cemented its absolute control. Whatever revolutionary rhetoric Mohamed V had wielded, Hassan II disposed of and, in a reversal of his predecessor's policies, reinforced the importance of traditional Islamic values.[151] Police officers started surveilling high schools, the government forbade all left-wing parties, and the Moroccan dissident and Third-Worldist militant, Mehdi Ben Barka, "disappeared" (i.e. was assassinated) in Paris in October 1965.[152] In March 1965, the army crushed a student-led protest in Casablanca, killing hundreds, and arresting thousands. In June, Hassan II declared a state of emergency and dissolved Parliament. Hassan II started to reign with absolute power and clamped down on any dissent.[153]

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[150] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Prologue," *Souffles*, Number 1, (First trimester 1966), p. 6.
[151] Zakya Daoud, *Les Années Lamalif (1958-1988) : trente ans de journalisme au Maroc* (Casablanca: Tarik Éditions, 2007), p. 201-202.
[152] For more on Mehdi Ben Barka and on his assassination see: Bachir Ben Barka (ed.), *Mehdi Ben Barka en héritage: de la Tricontinentale a l'altermondialisme* (Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 2007); René Gallissot and Jacques Kergoat (eds.), *Mehdi Ben Barka: de l'indépendance marocaine à la Tricontinentale* (Paris: Karthala, 1997); Saïd Bouamama, *Figures de la Révolution Africaine: de Kenyatta à Sankara* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2014).
[153] Pierre Vermeren, *Histoire du Maroc Depuis l'indépendance,* (Paris: la Découverte, 2002) ; Rollinde, M., *Le Mouvement marocain des droits de l'Homme* (Paris: Karthala, 2002); Kenza Sefraoui, *op.cit.*, pp. 53-56.

In this new context, *Souffles* turned outward for support in their fight against neocolonialism, French and American imperialism, and, eventually, their own government. As the *Souffles* writers witnessed and wrote about the political upheavals around the world, they started feeling that poetry, alone, could not destroy the extreme power imbalances between Europe and the rest of the world. This mirrored Luso-African revolutionaries' own realization that culture would not be enough to bring about revolutionary change. Between 1968 and 1971, the members of *Souffles* became active members of a transnational network of revolutionary artists and intellectuals, all decidedly anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and anti-imperial—all concerned with how to use poetry as a weapon in continuous revolution. Alongside the journal, many of its members were politically engaged in Marxist groups in Morocco and publicly denounced the repressive Moroccan government, which eventually led to the groups' arrest and imprisonment at the hands of the Moroccan regime.

*Rejection of Négritude*

Much like their Luso-African peers, one of the first political and cultural movements emerging from amongst the formerly colonized that the *Souffles* group had to contend with was *négritude*. While Mario de Andrade's initial approach to *négritude* was to emulate Senghor's *Anthologie de la poésie nègre et malgache*, the *Souffles* team almost immediately dismissed *négritude* as obsolete and infantilizing. Andrade may have found solace in the recovery of Black dignity, but the concept of *négritude* did not speak to the *Souffles* team. To Laâbi the proponents of *négritude* were "electronic monkeys," wind-up toys with which Europeans could play: "Thank you daddy Senghor Uncle

nègricultivator thanks for introducing me exposing me undressing me stripteasing me in my natural state my collective memory my unconscious-nightmare my moral-wisdom," Laâbi wrote in his 1969 poem "Windup Monkey."[154] Using a language steeped in European racial tropes, Laâbi derided Black pride as apeish.

Anti-Senghor rhetoric was a common practice throughout the journal's existence; the Senegalese president was regularly designated as corrupt, naive, and a Europhile. He was the figurehead of a racial ideology that left the increasingly radicalized members of *Souffles* deeply uncomfortable. When, in April 1966, Senghor opened up the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Moroccan journalist Abdallah Stouky, *Souffles*' envoy at the Festival, dubbed Senghor a "nègre greco-latin," in ironic reference to Senghor's distinction between Greco-Latin and Black culture. "Using, as one must, all of the modern means of propaganda," mocked Stouky in *Souffles*' second issue, "a grand Senegalese chief, [...] surrounded by sad ethnologists and false champions of decolonization and emancipation, will call for the gathering of all Black forces in the world."[155] Stouky was not impressed by the Festival, the apogee of exoticism, he claimed, with its sad museums and its dapper audience "whistling at the sight of breasts, as in any other strip-tease show in Pigalle."[156]

While Mario de Andrade and his peers had turned away from *négritude* towards a form of racialized revolutionary ideology, they still respected the steps that *négritude* had allowed them to take in the process of building self-awareness. Laâbi and his peers, however, showed no such respect for *négritude*'s struggles. Despite this differences,

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[154] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Les Singes Électroniques," *Souffles,* Number 16-17, (Fourth trimester 1969), p. 40.
[155] Abdallah Stouky, "Le festival mondial des arts nègres ou les nostalgiques de la négritude," *Souffles*, Number 2, (Second trimester 1966), p. 41.
[156] *Ibid*. p. 43.

however, both groups agreed that, in the 1960s, *négritude* was no longer an appropriate ideology. "In 1966," asked Stouky, "what can *négritude* possibly mean? Does the Negro even still exist? Are we still at a point where we need to racialize thought?" To Stouky, not only was *négritude* anachronistic, but Blacks themselves no longer existed, replaced as they were by the resistant, the fighter. "The negro no longer exists. The African has taken his place," Stouky explained, "We should not forget that 'questions of race are but a superstructure, a mantle, an obscure ideological emanation concealing an economic reality'."[157]

According to Stouky and his peers at *Souffles*, the search for a racial identity which characterized the *négritude* movement was a false problem, a veil obscuring the realities of economic underdevelopment. *Souffles*' co-founder Mostafa Nissabouri explained in a 2018 interview that, unlike Senghor and Césaire, he was not in search of his identity for "Moroccans were the only ones in all of Africa who could talk about their own history. For the Ottoman Empire stopped at our doors. Cooking, language, literature all those have no Ottoman influences. We are an exception compared to all the other Arab and African countries."[158] These, claimed Nissabouri, were the reasons *négritude* did not resonate with the members of *Souffles*. The *Souffles* team's constant deriding of *négritude*, and of its primary proponent Senghor, their sense that Moroccan identity was somehow more authentic than that of other African countries, as well as some of their assumptions about Sub-Saharan culture and history, demonstrate how deep the racialized divisions between the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa had sunk. Even in the context of

[157] *Ibid.* p. 45.
[158] Mostapha Nissabouri, interview with author, February 13, 2018, Casablanca, Morocco.

Pan-African friendship and unity, many of the members of *Souffles* could not let go of their sense of cultural superiority.

Martinican poet Aimé Césaire, co-founder of the *négritude* movement, was more to *Souffles'* liking.[159] Césaire was both a source of inspiration and a forefather with which to contend. In an article entitled "Préface à un procès à la *négritude*," published in the third edition of the journal in the fall of 1966, French poet André Laude sought to figure out if "*négritude*, which has a past, can claim a future."[160] The *négritude* intellectuals, Laude explained, detached from their own culture, had nothing with which to counter the colonial invasion of the mind but the memory of having been something other than a rootless person. To Laude, Aimé Césaire alone had managed to fray himself a passage, with the help of surrealism, the "miraculous weapon," capable of killing the white cadaver nailed in him. While they may have found inspiration in Césaire's style of poetry, the writers of *Souffles* toed an ever more militant line, much like their Luso-African colleagues. The founders of *Souffles* intended to fight the revolution at home—not only through their words, but also through weapons. Just like Mario de Andrade, Marcelino dos Santos, and their colleagues, this generation of *Souffles* writers did not think of themselves as theorists of cultural independence, but as practitioners of intellectual decolonization, and as poets of the people. They were the organic intellectual and they were able to fight in a way the *négritude* poets never had, through their access to money, weapons, and the fixings of a free state.[161]

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[159] Césaire was cited by ten writers over the course of *Souffles*' tenure. [Kenza Sefraoui, "Les auteurs cités par Souffles," document in author's possession.]
[160] André Laude, "Préface à un Procès de la Négritude," *Souffles*, Number 3, (Third trimester 1966), p. 33.
[161] The members of *Souffles* and many more of the Maghreb Generation were readers of the Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci. In our interview Haitian poet René Depestre told me his favorite communist was Gramsci. In many ways, the members of *Souffles* and the militant poets of the Maghreb Generation took on the mantel of the organic intellectual and described their mission as that of articulating the desires

*The Question of Language*

Although *Souffles* quickly dismissed *négritude*, the group had to contend with many of the issues at the core of the *négritude* movement. One of the fiercest controversies on the pages of *Souffles* was the question of language. This was, of course, at the center of many of the debates between African writers, whether they were Francophone, Lusophone, Anglophone, or Arabophone. Writers generally fell into three different distinct groups. Group one, those who wrote in the colonial tongue and argued that this was either necessary or unproblematic. Group two, those who used the colonial language, but modified its rhythm, its syntax, added words, in order to claim it as their own, to "black-ify" it. And finally group three, those who chose to write instead in their indigenous tongue. One of the main problems these writers faced is that not all were capable of writing in the indigenous tongue. Many urban Angolans, for instance, had only rudimentary understandings of indigenous languages.[162] The writers of *Souffles*, as many of their African peers, ended up adopting all three of these stances at some point or another. At first, Laâbi and his peers argued against those, like Tunisian Albert Memmi or Algerian Malek Haddad, who thought Maghrebi Francophone literature was doomed to die.[163] Laâbi was convinced that a decolonized Francophone literature could exist in Morocco. But as the journal came under fire for publishing in French, Laâbi began to

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and needs of the masses. For more on the "organic intellectual," see David Forgacs ed., *The Antonio Gramsci Readers: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pp. 300-322.

[162] Russell G Hamilton, "Language and Literature in Portuguese-Writing Africa," *Portuguese Studies,* volume 2, (1986), pp. 196-207, p. 203; Russell G Hamilton, "Lusofonia, Africa, and Matters of Languages and Letters." *Hispania* 74, Number 3, (1991), pp. 610-17; Gerald J. Bender, *Africa Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 222.

[163] Albert Memmi (1920-) is a Tunisian Intellectual, best known for his 1957 *Portrait of the Colonized Preceded by the Portrait of the Colonizer*. Malek Haddad (1927-1978) was a Francophone Algerian poet. Though both were Francophone writers, both believed that Maghrebi literature of French expression was bound to die.

argue that their use of French was a weapon in the resistance to neocolonialism. Finally, as the 1960s turned into the 1970s, *Souffles* opted to transition to Arabic—which *Souffles*' members now considered a more authentic expression of Moroccan identity—despite the fact that most of the editorial team wrote in French. The switch to Arabic came with a shift of focus away from Africa and the Third-World, towards Pan-Arab nationalism and an overwhelming focus on the struggle of the Palestinian people.

In his manifesto-like prologue of the very first issue of *Souffles*, Laâbi explained that the *Souffles* writers were quite aware of the ambiguity of writing a journal like *Souffles* in French in a primarily Arabophone or Berberophone country. But Laâbi dismissed this question as a "fake-problem." The important thing, he clarified, was to match the written language to the poet's interior world. Some may never succeed in this, even in their national language, he asserted. In *Souffles*, Laâbi explained, the poets expressed their sensual depths through the intermediary of a language "fine-combed by their history, their mythology, their anger, in short their own personality."[164] As *Souffles*' co-founder, Mustapha Nissabouri, explained in a letter published in the first issue: "poetry must be nothing other than synonymous with flesh, blood, sweat, and saliva [...] it must drop all metaphysical and philosophical preoccupations to cling instead to the (hu)man, with his movements, his grimaces, the scream of his entrails."[165] Beauty was not the concern; much like Aimé Césaire in his poetry, this group of Moroccan poets were not preoccupied with stylistic devices, but with raw emotion and with suffering.

If in 1966 Laâbi dismissed his use of French as a "fake-problem," by 1970 he seemed increasingly defensive of *Souffles*' primary language. The *Souffles* writers, Laâbi

[164] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Prologue," *Souffles*, Number 1, (First trimester 1966), p. 5.
[165] Mustapha Nissabouri, *Souffles*, Number 1, (First trimester 1966), p. 8.

insisted, refused to be categorized, cloistered in by language-purity; their resorting to French did not mean that they subscribed to the French, or European, canon. Laâbi insisted that despite the poets' use of French, the "coexistence was not pacific."[166] The usage of French was a middle-passage, Laâbi explained in an article entitled "Littérature maghrébine actuelle et francophonie," eventually the only true way to be decolonized would be to think and write in the national languages. In the meantime, however, Laâbi's aim was to create a new literature all together—a terrorist literature. This terrorist literature would shatter the original logic of the French language at all levels (syntactic, phonetic, morphological, graphical, symbolic, etc.), and infuse the French language with Maghrebi concerns.[167]

In the same 1970 issue, in an article entitled "Au sujet d'un certain procès de la littérature maghrébine écrite en français," Laâbi showed clear irritation towards critics of the journal's choice of language, accusing those critics of being lovers of Sartre and Camus, and pseudo-defenders of Arab culture. "They may write in Arabic," he exclaimed, "but in reality, they are neo-imperialists and into European literary fashions and trends."[168] If *Souffles* was unapologetic about its usage of French in the first few issues, as the journal matured and its audience grew, the absence of Arabic became more and more problematic. The journal dedicated it's 10-11th issue to Arabic-language poetry from the Maghreb. A couple other issues also contained a few poems in Arabic, including

[166] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Littérature maghrébine actuelle et francophonie," *Souffles*, Number 18, (March-April 1970), p. 36.
[167] *Ibid.*
[168] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Au sujet d'un certain procès de la littérature maghrébine écrite en français," *Souffles*, Number 18, (March-April 1970), p. 64.

a few poems by Laâbi himself. But it wasn't until 1971 that *Souffles'* editors decided to start an Arabic-language branch: *Anfas*.

In December 1971, in the last issue of *Souffles* before its participants were imprisoned, Laâbi's rhetoric had changed. After a short pause for lack of funding, the *Souffles* editorial team had decided that they could no longer condemn *francophonie* as a tool of neocolonialism while writing exclusively in French. They announced their creation of *Anfas* the previous May of 1971. *Anfas*' objective was different, they emphasized. *Souffles* would remain for those Moroccan intellectuals who "due to their complex vis-à-vis Western culture" could not read Arabic, as well as for foreigners who sided with the *Souffles* teams' ideals.[169] Thus, *Souffles* would no longer be a progressive platform "a forced tribune of *francophonie*, but a journal dedicated to informing and making connections, the usage of French would thus take on a practical and objective role."[170] Like Kenyan writer and intellectual Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, who switched from writing in English to writing exclusively in Gikuyu, the members of *Souffles* wondered how they could address themselves to the lives of the masses if they were writing in a language that the people could not read, or even understand.[171] In the same breath, the

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[169] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Avant-Propos," *Souffles*, Number 22, (November-December 1971), p. 4.
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] When, as a young novelist and student, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o participated in the 1962 Conference of African Writers of English Expression in Uganda, he noted that the subject of language as a determinant of both the national and class audience was not even broached. All the attendees accepted the fatalistic logic of relegating their native tongue to orality and accepting the forceful gift of a European language. Wa Thing'o warned of the dangers of accepting this logic; how can we create a literature that addresses itself to the lives of the people when we write in language they do not understand and cannot read? The Kenyan writer thus broke from what he scathingly called a petty-bourgeois-Afro-European tradition, and, after the publication of *Decolonizing the Mind*, decided to write exclusively in his native Gikuyu. "The future of the African novel," he claimed, "is then dependent on a willing writer, a willing translator, a willing publisher, or a progressive state which would overhaul the current of neo-colonial linguistic policies and finally, and most important, a willing and widening readership." The writer, he argued, was the best placed to break the vicious cycle of neo-colonial linguistics and root herself in the rich oral tradition of the peasantry. [Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in Africa,* (Nairobi: East African Publishers, 1994), p. 85.]

editorial explained that *Souffles* could no longer publish any materials that no longer centered on the Maghreb and the Arab world. "Not that we feel less concerned by the fight in Africa and the Third-World, but we believe that others can lead that struggle better than us," the editors explained.[172]

*Souffles* thus abandoned its Pan-African dimension just as the editorial board decided to publish an Arabic version. The usage of French had permitted *Souffles* to partake in a global network of ideas emerging from a diversity of linguistic, cultural, and geographical locations. French allowed *Souffles* to discursively link Moroccan postcolonial and working-class realities with those same conflicts and struggles from subaltern populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United-States.[173] Though *Souffles* claimed it would continue in French, its rhetoric had changed: it was no longer participating in a trans-national network of revolutionary poets. The use of French, in 1971, only served as a means to stay in contact with the European "fringe" that supported the struggles of the Arab people. Now *Souffles* was concerned with matters on the ground in the Maghreb or the Arab world. The journal's final issue, dedicated to the resolution of the Palestinian problem, included such subsections as "Luttes Ouvrières," "Réalités Nationales," "Nation Arabe," and "Action Idéologique."[174] "Souffles-Littéraires," now only took up ten pages of the journal, and the large majority of the journal's articles were focused on the Arab world, and, in particular, on the question of Palestine.

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[172] *Ibid.,* p. 5.
[173] Safoi Babana-Hampton, "Translating the Postcolonial Condition in *Souffles-Anfas*," *Expressions maghrébines*, Volume 15, Number 1, (Summer 2016), pp. 169-185, p. 177.
[174] *Souffles*, Number 22, (November-December 1972), p. 1.

The Palestinian question had been at the center of *Souffles*' politicization since the 1967 war. *Souffles*' 15th issue was entirely dedicated to the Palestinian Revolution. Laâbi testified to the importance of Palestine in his political trajectory: "My political consciousness was born from my adherence to the Palestinian cause [...] it determined my commitment in the struggles that followed, even those in my own country."[175] The Palestinian question became an Arab question, one around which all the revolutionaries and masses of the Arab world could coalesce. The enemy was no longer just the West, but the bourgeois-nationalists of Jordan and Egypt who were seemingly capitulating to Zionism and imperialism. As the *Souffles* team wrote in 1970, "a new Arab solidarity was born at the bottom, as a retort to the solidarity at the top which is tainted by all sorts of secondary considerations."[176]

*Anfas* took the Palestinian problem head-on dedicating, at minimum, one article per issue to Palestine. *Anfas* did not have much to do with *Souffles'* original intent. Purely political, the editorial board only dedicated two articles, over the course of its eight issues, to literature, and only published a couple poems. *Anfas* was committed to serving a Marxist-Leninist working-class audience, by simplifying and adapting its style to the language predominantly spoken by the broadest base of the literate public, though how many people actually read it is less clear, for *Anfas* was published in classical Arabic, not in *darijah* [Moroccan Arabic]. Furthermore, according to the 1960 census, only eleven percent of the Moroccan population was literate. Of those who could read, fifty-one percent were literate in Arabic, forty in Arabic and French, and eight in French alone.[177]

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[175] Abdellatif Laâbi, *Le livre imprévu*, (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 2010).
[176] "Sahara Occidental," *Souffles*, Number 19, (1970), p. 48.
[177] *Area Handbook for Morocco* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 153.

Thus, though the switch to Arabic would open up the journal to a broader base, that audience still only represented, at best, eleven percent of the total Moroccan population. Certainly, *Anfas* had a much wider circulation than *Souffles*. It was published monthly, rather than quarterly. It cost nearly half the price (1.50 Dirhams instead of 2.50), and was printed at five thousand copies, as opposed to *Souffles*' one thousand copies.[178] As scholar Kenza Sefraoui argues, *Anfas* contributed largely to the development of a strong Marxist-Leninist movement in Morocco, becoming the intellectual showcase of the movement. The editorial board of *Anfas* was very outspoken against the Moroccan government and wrote endlessly about the struggles of the Moroccan working-class.

In its eighth and final issue, *Anfas* published an article entitled "A new Palestine in the Sahara," which condemned the Moroccan, Algerian, and Spanish imperialism in the Western Sahara, and voiced the editors' support for Saharan independence.[179] It may very well be this final editorial that set loose the Moroccan government upon the *Souffles-Anfas* editors. For, as Kenza Sefraoui, Teresa Villa-Ignacio, and Olivia Harrison all argue, *Anfas* was much more threatening than *Souffles* to the Moroccan political establishment due to its use of Arabic and its much wider reach. A month after the publication of *Anfas*, Abdellatif Laâbi and some of his peers were arrested for being "the leader of Moroccan maoists."[180]

[178] Sefraoui, *La Revue Souffles, op.cit.*, p. 109 and p. 40.
[179] « Falesṭyn ǧdydẗ fy ārḍ ālṣẖrā' » *Anfas*, Number 8, (December 1971-January 1972), pp. 66-77.
[180] Jocelyne Laâbi, *La liqueur d'aloès*, (Paris: Différences, 2005).

*Fanon and the Switch from Poetry to Politics*

The second intellectual current that the *Souffles* team had to contend with was the revolutionary rhetoric emanating from the Frantz Fanon school of thought. Though Frantz Fanon had been dead for five years by the time the first issue of *Souffles* was published, his philosophy had reached its apogee in the mid-1960s; he was quoted at length by the Black Panthers and translated into Swedish and Arabic.[181] His seminal text, *The Wretched of the Earth*, was first published in 1961 and quickly became a must-read for all young, politically-minded Africans. A diagnosis of the dehumanizing effects of colonization, *The Wretched of the Earth* was above all a roadmap for achieving political, social, and cultural decolonization.

If Fanon had influenced the Luso-African poets to return to the African continent, Laâbi and his peers also heeded his call to leave Europe behind. Fanon's philosophy permeated *Souffles*' understanding of the role of culture in Africa, the Maghreb, and the Black Atlantic. The journal was steeped in Fanon's analysis and writings as the main subjects of the journal demonstrate: the decolonization of culture, the role of the Third World intellectual, the persistence of the colonial system in the cultural arena, and the necessity to highlight popular culture.[182] Thirteen authors cited Fanon over the course of the journal's tenure, second only to Karl Marx (cited by sixteen writers).[183] The contributors used his expressions and fragments of his wording, which they wove through their own analysis, constructing a tight-knit tapestry of new and borrowed postcolonial

[181] For more on Frantz Fanon's worldwide reception see: Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães « Frantz Fanon's reception in Brazil », *Lusotopie*, XVI (2), (2009), pp. 157-172; Kathryn Batchelor and Sue-Ann Harding eds., *Translating Frantz Fanon Across Continents and Languages* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Edumund Burke, "Frantz Fanon's "The Wretched of the Earth"," *Daedalus* 105, Number 1, (1976), pp. 127-35.
[182] Sefraoui, *La Revue Souffles, op.cit.*, p. 67.
[183] Kenza Sefraoui, "Les auteurs cités par *Souffles*," document in author's possession.

theory. They used Fanon as a justification for a certain number of their positions on the use of violence, as well as on the question of language. In response to critics calling him a sell-out for writing in French, Laâbi retorted "Frantz Fanon wrote *Les Damnés de la Terre* (as much of a theoretical work as a literary one) in French. We do not think that the militants of Francophonie can take pride in his work!"[184] On the contrary, Laâbi explained, Fanon's text was theirs to claim. The first time Laâbi had read Fanon's work, as a student in Rabat, he felt he was reading his own story, that of his people. Fanon's text, Laâbi confessed, "opened my eyes to my social body and my past and present memory, it had me spell out my identity, deeply stirred my roots, inoculated my fury to be, to demand, and to refuse."[185]

Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* provides a clear layout of the phases of development of the "colonized intellectual." Fanon first presented his paper "On National Culture" at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Rome in 1959, in front of such militant-poets as Mario de Andrade. Through this paper, Fanon delivered the first death blow to the *négritude* movement, just a year before Léopold Sédar Senghor became Senegal's first president. Delineating the ways to achieve a decolonized national culture, Fanon explained that the "colonized writer" naturally traversed three stages. First the "colonized writer" became so enamored with European culture that he completely assimilated European literary trends: symbolism, surrealism, romanticism, etc.[186] To illustrate this first stage Fanon cited a poem by Haitian René Depestre:

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[184] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Littérature Maghrébine actuelle et Francophonie," *Souffles*, Number 18, (First trimestre 1970), p. 37.
[185] Abdellatif Laâbi, *La Brûlure des Interrogations*, Entretiens réalisés par Jacques Alessandra, (Paris : l'Harmattan, 1985), p. 32.
[186] I use the male pronoun, despite my initial instinct to utilize the gender neutral "they," because in Fanon and Depestre's mind the "colonized writer" is a man, as demonstrated by their usage of "lui" and "il." Using "they" would thus hide these men's own erasure of colonized women writers.

A fine, upstanding husband
Who recited Racine and Corneille
And Voltaire and Rousseau
And old Hugo and the young Musset
And Gide and Valery
And so many others as well [...]
But to tell the truth he knew nothing
Because culture does not come without making concessions
Without conceding your flesh and blood
Without conceding yourself to others
A concession worth just as much as
Classicism or Romanticism
And all that nurtures our Soul.[187]

After this assimilation-phase, Fanon explained, the colonized writer turned back to his roots. But since the colonized writer was completely disconnected from his people, since he had conceded his very flesh and blood, he could only remember old childhood memories, old legends, and an ancient concept of the world. To Fanon, *négritude* was stuck in this second stage, glorifying a fictitious past, not for themselves or their people, but to impress the European colonizer. Fanon argued that the *négritude* poets still had to transition to the third stage: the combat stage, where "instead of letting the people's lethargy prevail, [the colonized writer] turns into a galvanizer of the people."[188] This is the stage that *Souffles*, the Luso-Africans, and the Maghreb Generation more generally, claimed to be in. They were no longer interested in talking to Europeans, in glorifying traditional Arabic poetry or "Negro-African" painting, only in rousing the masses. In the ideological struggle between *négritude* and Fanonism, the Maghreb Generation stood on Fanon's side, committed to the third stage of the revolution.

[187] René Depestre, "Face à la nuit," cited in Frantz Fanon, *The 2 the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), p. 156.
[188] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

At first, Abdellatif Laâbi emitted some reservations when it came to Frantz Fanon's analysis of the Arab world. In *Souffles*' fourth issue, published in the fall of 1966, Laâbi reminded the reader that modes of colonization were different from one country to the other, and argued that Fanon excessively conflated his observations of Algeria and of Black Africa. If some cultures, particularly in Black Africa, "certainly alive but comparatively closed and not participating in modern society," did not counterbalance colonialism, the Arab Nahda [renaissance] had shown "an ideological and cultural opposition, and a dynamic one."[189] Much as Fanon's brand of internationalism inspired the writers of *Souffles,* in 1966 Laâbi was still not willing to concede that their situation was as bleak as those of other African countries. The postcolonial recovery of Moroccan culture did not have to go through the same stages as the rediscovery of Black culture, Laâbi asserted, "Moroccan and Arab culture did not need as much exhibitionism to be present. It already existed."[190] For Laâbi, again, Moroccans did not have to go through as conspicuous a self-discovery as the creators of *négritude*. While Laâbi had derided *négritude* and its founders for their race-based pride, he seemed equally uncomfortable with Fanon's class approach to colonialism. Laâbi insisted that the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African could not simply be lumped together; to Laâbi there was a difference, perhaps not racial, but cultural or civilizational. Laâbi's uneasiness with both Fanon's class analysis of colonialism and Senghor's racial understanding of colonialism, reveal the sense of superiority, unconscious but deeply-embedded, that many Maghrebi intellectuals felt *vis-à-vis* their Sub-Saharan peers.

[189] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Réalités et Dilemmes de la culture nationale," *Souffles*, Number 4, (Fourth trimester 1966), p. 7.
[190] *Ibid.*

Slowly Laâbi and his peers started to grow more comfortable with Fanon's reading of postcolonial societies, and the need for continued revolution. Many of those who have written about *Souffles*, and indeed the members of *Souffles* itself, claim that it was the issue of Palestine that finally politicized the *Souffles* team. After the devastating losses of the 1967 Six-Day War, the *Souffles* writers could no longer sit by and write poetry. *Souffles'* editors opened their fifteenth issue with the following: "it seems to us after several months that an essentially literary revue could become, possibly, a sort of "luxury" in light of the many shortcomings of the national press."[191] After this fifteenth number, the journal's format changed, forsaking the abstract covers of the first installments for photographs and drawings depicting men toting Kalashnikovs, and a much more explicit Marxist-Leninist tone. Some of *Souffles'* contributors distanced themselves as a result, claiming that the journal had abandoned its original literary intent to tumble wholeheartedly into the arms of the radical left.

In December 1970, at a meeting of Arab poets in Beirut**,** Laâbi explained that while the Maghrebi poets had a lot in common with Arab poets, in the Maghreb "the colonial rape was much more ambitious, more extreme, and more brutal," than in the rest of the Middle East. In that sense, he explained, the Moroccans and Maghrebis were much closer to the revolutionary movements coming out of Africa and the Antilles:

> The works of one Aimé Césaire, one Frantz Fanon, and," he continued, "more recently, the writings of René Depestre (Haiti), one Mario de Andrade (Angola), one Cabral (Portuguese Guinea) etc… rigorously correspond to our own mollifying and restructuring efforts as well as to the necessities of a fight again cultural and ideological domination and for an authentic and revolutionary culture of the laborious masses.[192]

[191] "Au lecteur," *Souffles*, Number 15, (3rd Trimester 1969), p. 1.
[192] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Intervention à la rencontre des poètes arabes," *Souffles*, Number 20-21, (First trimestre 1971), p. 55.

With this statement Laâbi searched for new alliances. Instead of looking to the Levant, he found peers and models in Sub-Saharan Africa and the African Diaspora. In Laâbi's poetic world, two races of men faced off. On one end was the race of the torturers, the hyenas, the vermin, the vampires, the jackals. On the other end was the Maghreb Generation, "the wretched of the earth," his tribe, his brothers of the rugged hands, those who lived in the "malaria of the streets."[193] Those were *Souffles*' peers—a generation, led by Frantz Fanon, that included Maghrebis, Sub-Saharan Africans, like Andrade and Cabral, and figures of the Black Atlantic, such as Depestre.

*Souffles* had made the shift from a small Moroccan literary journal primarily concerned with the state of poetry in the nation, to a militant magazine taking part in a worldwide movement to decolonize the mind through poetry, political action and guerilla warfare. By the late 1960s, the journal was at the center of a world-wide conversation about neocolonialism, imperialism, and Third Worldism. Scholars have often situated that conversation in the Americas, or in Europe, but the existence of *Souffles*, and the reach of its subscribers and contributors, showcase the centrality of the African continent, and of the Maghreb, in particular, to this dialogue. Through *Souffles*, Morocco, once more, became a hub for thinkers and artists from America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to meet, in person or on paper, and to exchange ideas. Indeed, by the late 1960s *Souffles* had become the cultural arm of an armed liberation movement that spanned five continents.

[193] Jacques Alessandra, *Abdellatif Laâbi: traversée de l'œuvre* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 2008), p. 44.

**Black Brothers in Arms**

*The Cultural Congress of Havana and Souffles' endorsement of Andrade*

Many of the scholars who have studied *Souffles* have argued that it was the conflict in Palestine that politicized the members of *Souffles*. In reality, *Souffle's* political bent started well before the journal's fifteenth issue, and, I argue, was intricately linked to the *Souffles* editors' unflinching admiration of and support for the Luso-African poets Mario de Andrade, Amilcar Cabral, and Marcelino dos Santos, whom they had met in Rabat. The *Souffles* writers looked to the conflict in Angola, Mozambique, and all over the Portuguese colonies for inspiration in how to deploy the theoretical tools that Fanon had set forth to actually decolonize culture in Africa.

*Souffles'* ninth issue, published in spring 1968, was almost entirely dedicated to the Cultural Congress of Havana. The Congress, organized by the Cuban government in January 1968, brought together militant intellectuals from around the world, over seventy countries, in an effort to garner political support for the fights of the masses against imperialism. *Souffles'* ninth issue included a series of essays, curated by Mario de Andrade himself, relaying the anti-*négritude* and Third-Worldist message of the Congress to *Souffles*' readership. In a short editorial, the *Souffles* board explained that they had specifically picked the texts that related to the question of *négritude* in order to continue their ongoing effort to situate the journal *vis-a-vis* contemporary debates in the Third World. Their goal was to demonstrate that *Souffles* had transcended *négritude*, and perhaps to bring in Black voices like Andrade's to bolster their point.[194]

[194] *Souffles*, Number 9, (First Trimester 1968), p. 31.

Indeed, the two essays Andrade presented to *Souffles*' readership were virulent critiques of *négritude* pronounced by Haitian poet René Depestre and Guinean playwright Condetto Nenekhaly Camara. Andrade explained that it was of dire importance for all those living in the 1968 postcolonial world to dismiss *négritude* and recognize the importance of political engagement. Andrade's rhetoric had changed since his publication of the *Antologia de la poesia de expressão portuguesa* in 1953. After five years in France, three in Morocco, and two in Algeria, gone was the admiration for the *négritude* movement, replaced by a more action-oriented rhetoric. Andrade's primary concerns were no longer to add one's' "particular tonalities [...] to the great human symphony," or to bring Black voices into the universal chorus.[195] In 1968, Andrade highlighted, they no longer cared if the West understood them, "our differences or our singularities."[196] Andrade contended that what Africa and the Third World ought to add to the great human symphony, was the revolution itself. In other words, Andrade was arguing not for enriching humanism, but for toppling it.

In "L'intellectuel révolutionnaire et ses responsabilités envers le tiers-monde," René Depestre claimed that *négritude* "separated from the historical context of the revolution in the Third-World, became an unacceptable "black Zionism" which kept the Black people away from their duty to do the revolution."[197] Condetto Nénékhaly-Camara, on the other hand, proclaimed *négritude* a sort of "false narcissism," like one "of those

[195] Mario Pinto de Andrade and Francisco Tenreiro, *Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa*, (Lisbon: Livraria Escolar Editora, 1953).
[196] Mario de Andrade, "Réflexions autour du congrès culturel de la Havane," *Souffles,* Number 9, (First trimester 1968), p. 37.
[197] René Depestre, "L'intellectuel révolutionnaire et ses responsabilités envers le Tiers-Monde," *Souffles*, Number 9, (First Trimester 1968), p. 45.

mad dogs spinning upon themselves trying to kiss their own tails."[198] Mario de Andrade ended his dossier on the Congress of Havana with a short piece entitled "Culture et lutte armée." In his typical way, Andrade blended revolutionary rhetoric with excerpts from poetry to argue that the most poetic of acts was to revolt against one's own dispossession, through violence. Other hands will beat the drums of guerilla victory in Guinea, he wrote, in the meantime:

> Go tell the Portuguese
> To stop scaring us in the bush
> For there is new blood
> That shoulders the gun
> For there is young blood
> To defend the homeland
> Only fire will make you leave
> Oh Portuguese
> Only the fire of the gun
> Only the finger on the trigger
> Will make you leave.[199]

For Andrade, not only was fighting the most poetic of acts, but in the fire of combat new forms of culture emerged; the poet's language transformed to become accessible to all, intellectuals as well as farmers.

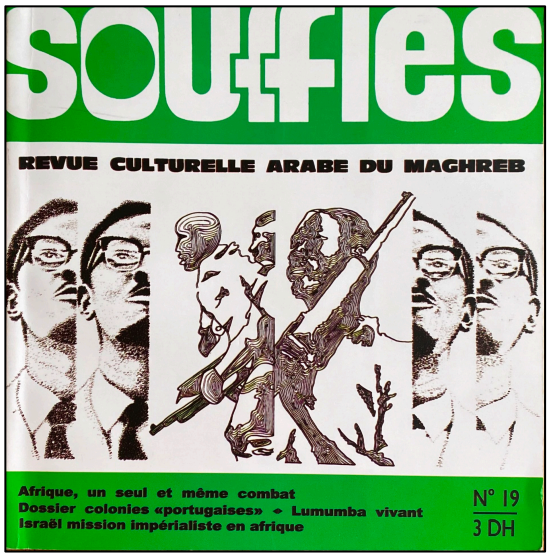
This ninth issue set the tone for the last four years of *Souffles*' tenure as a literary journal: poetry would be a political rallying cry, or it would not be published. By giving voice to thinkers such as Mario de Andrade, René Depestre, and Nénékhaly-Camara, *Souffles* positioned itself as a Maghrebi literary journal that spoke to and for people across Africa, the Black Atlantic, and the Third-World. As scholar Andy Stafford points out, as early as issues ten and eleven, advertisements started regularly appearing for the

[198] Condetto Nenekhali Camara, "Conscience révolutionnaire, ideologie et culture," *Souffles*, Number 9, (First Trimester 1968), p. 50.
[199] Mario de Andrade, "Culture et Lutte Armée," *Souffles*, Number 9, (First trimester 1968), pp. 51-4.

radical Cuban journal *Casa de la Americas*, thus, confirming *Souffles* links to the tricontinentalist movements.[200]

*"Afrique, un seul et même combat:" The Special Issue for the Luso-African Movements*

In 1970, for *Souffles*' nineteenth edition, the editors decided to dedicate an entire issue to the struggle in the Portuguese colonies. The cover, designed by artist Mohammed Chabâa, was a mosaic of an image of Patrice Lumumba accompanied by a drawing of an armed militant brought together with winding lines reminiscent of the grooves in a tree trunk. Upon publishing this nineteenth issue, *Souffles* also printed a poster celebrating the tenth anniversary of February 4th, 1960—the day that sparked the MPLA's armed revolt in Angola. The poster, designed by Chabâa as well, depicts a black figure gazing at a bleeding red sun, above a poem by Agostinho Neto entitled "The Struggle," in which he evokes the waves of Angolan fighters that will push back the Portuguese bayonets.[201]




"Afrique, un seul et même combat."

The nineteenth issue of *Souffles*, 1970.

[200] Andy Stafford, "Tricontinentalism in recent Moroccan intellectual history: the case of *Souffles," Journal of Transatlantic Studies,* Volume 7, (2009), p. 223.
[201] Mohammed Chabâa, "Angola 10 MPLA vaincra," *Une saison ardente Souffles 50 ans après*, *op.cit.,* p. 402.


"Angola 10 MPLA will win"

Poster designed by Mohammed Chabâa.

"The Struggle," poem by Agostinho Neto.

1970.

Directed by Mario de Andrade, and including texts by Amilcar Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, and Agostinho Neto, the nineteenth issue came complete with a small presentation of each Portuguese colony, poems, and manifestos. Introducing this special issue, the *Souffles* team explained that the fight led by the Mozambican and Angolan militants against Portuguese ultra-colonialism was one of the most advanced in Africa. Reflecting on their strategies and realizing that the enemy was the same in Mozambique as in Palestine, Eritrea or South Africa, *Souffles* decided to entitle this special issue: "Afrique, un seul et même combat" [Africa, one and the same battle]. *Souffles* presented the anti-colonial struggles in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Chad, and the

Sahara on top of their focus on the MPLA and FRELIMO, the whole time underlining the fact that they could only win these battles through inter-African cooperation.

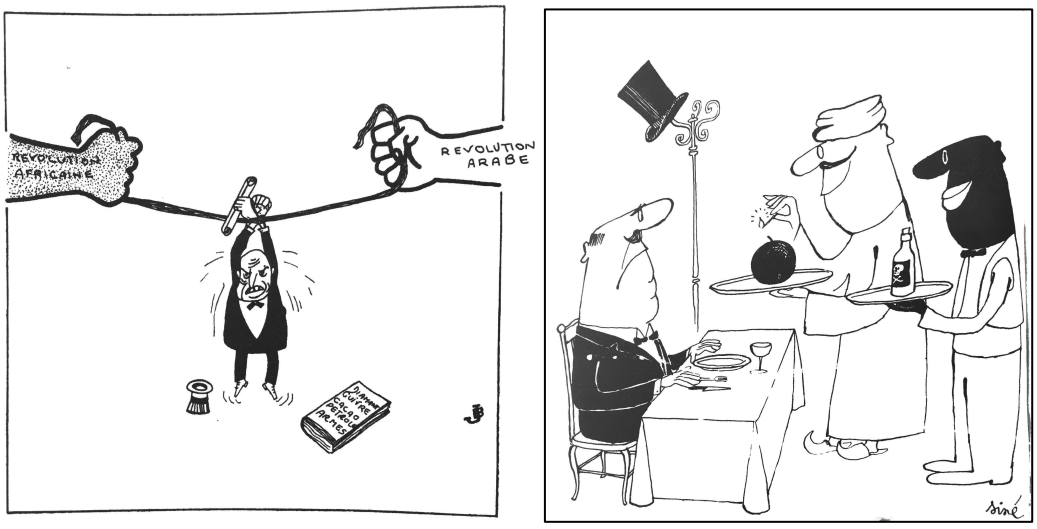
The entire issue was dedicated to making one thing clear: the fights in Northern Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa were the same and must be waged in tandem if there was any hope for victory. In introducing the struggles in Chad and Eritrea, the *Souffles* team explained that imperialism sought to separate Africa into two. The emptiness in the middle, the Sahara, the Europeans reserved for themselves, in their endless search for cheap thrills, petrol, and minerals. To this day, they still attempt to divide us, the writers decried, with the occasional help of some long-toothed bourgeois-nationalists; and now "watch as Arab Africa and Black Africa stand together in the same fight, against the same enemy of the people. And see the emptiness is no longer empty but a common battle."[202] After all, the *Souffles* team asked, is Chad in north or sub-Saharan Africa? Is Eritrea Black or Arab?[203]

In a text entitled, "Nous devons nous battre jusqu'à la victoire" [we must fight until victory], an excerpt from a speech Agostinho Neto delivered on "Radio Tanzanie" in January 1968, Neto explained that the MPLA was not leading a racial war; they were not fighting the White man merely because of his whiteness. All those who came to Angola, unarmed, ready to fight, or to help in any other way, Neto claimed, would never be treated as enemies. "We do not look for support only south of the Sahara, what we call black Africa, where the inhabitants' skin is darker," Neto insisted, "we also seek help in North Africa, where the people have light skin."[204] Do not confuse your enemies with

[202] "Fiche Erythrée," *Souffles*, Number 19, (1970), P. 49
[203] *Ibid.*
[204] Agostinho Neto, "Nous devons nous battre jusqu'à la victoire," *Souffles*, Number 19, (1970), p. 34.

your friends, Neto warned his auditors, underscoring once more the necessity of Pan-African partnership and the possibility of dissent against repressive national or "Black" regimes.

A rare addition to *Souffles*' artistic vocabulary served to underline the point that the Arab Revolution and the African Revolution were a pair: cartoons. The only issue to include cartoons, "Afrique un seul et même combat" sported two drawings, one by Siné (Maurice Sinet) and the other by JB.[205] Siné's whole page drawing, portrayed a capitalist, reminiscent of Charles de Gaulle, pompously seated across from two waiters, one Arab the other Black, serving the businessman an explosive cocktail. The second caricature depicted a businessman held hostage by the hands of the Arab and African revolutions, forced to drop his primary resources and his hat. Both drawings underlined the continued oppression of Africans by white politicians and capitalists, but also stressed the urgent need for a joint effort in bringing down these neo-colonialists.




Cartoons by JB (left) and Siné (right) in *Souffles*' 19th issue, 1970.

[205] I have not been able to identify JB.

Appropriately, for a literary view, *Souffles* closed the nineteenth issue with a FRELIMO report dedicated to the role of poetry in the Mozambican revolution. After a short presentation on the history of Mozambican poetry from the 19th century to the end of World War II, the authors of the FRELIMO brief explained that any contemporary poet who did not directly participate in the struggle on the ground was so detached from reality that they knew of liberty only its name. Only the revolution could provide poets with essential elements, without which poetry was impartial and incomplete; "only the Revolution can substantiate poetry's most outlandish dreams and even go well beyond its dreams."[206] For with the Revolution "words became real, in the literal sense. [...] There is no longer metaphorical dissemblance between the fire of poetry and the fire of grenades and mortars."[207]

New Mozambican poetry, the bulletin explained, was entirely new because it was intimately linked to life. It was not art for art's sake, but art for life's sake. This was the norm in pre-capitalist societies, the bulletin claimed, but an anomaly in Western capitalist societies, where making art was a job, a specialization, and where viewing art was reserved to an hour or so of a person's day in a museum, in a theater, with seemingly no relation to the rest of one's life. In the old world, poetry was an exceptional art for exceptional people. Poetry in the new world, however, was no longer a specialization, "there is no longer 'the poet' once everyone is a poet. Tomorrow there will be no masters, for everyone will have become master of themselves. This is the lesson of poetry and it is

[206] "Bulletin du FRELIMO," July 1969, in *Souffles*, Number 19, (1970), p. 83.
[207] *Ibid.*

essential to our revolution."[208] Not only did the Revolution entirely transform the nature of poetry, and art more generally, in Mozambique, but it also liberated the power of speech so that all could become poets. The poems in these pages, the report explained, were just the tip of the iceberg of poetic production in the Portuguese colonies, a testament to the quantity of creative energy liberated by the Revolution.

Like the members of *Souffles*, the Lusophone poets claimed to make a non-elitist poetry, one that every man and woman could understand and write. A poetry entrenched in reality, coarse and beautiful as it was. Their material, they all claimed, was life itself. The new Mozambican poets gave birth to the new nation, named it, named its heroes, and used their art as a rallying cry. "It is because never will I retreat/never, never, never/without my people winning/here in Mozambique," exclaimed Marcelino do Santos. In this they were all heading the advice of their precursor Frantz Fanon. Already in 1959, Fanon had explained, that during the revolutionary phase "a great many men and women who previously would never have thought of writing, now that they find themselves in exceptional circumstances, in prison, in the resistance or on the eve of their execution, feel the need to proclaim their nation, to portray their people and become the spokesperson of a new reality in action."[209]

Historians have overlooked how crucial the realm of the cultural was in rousing African men and women's sense of political outrage and their desire to take political and, at times, violent action against colonialism and neocolonialism.[210] As Marissa Moorman,

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[208] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[209] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *op.cit.,* p. 159.
[210] For notable exceptions to this statement see: Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991).

a historian of Angola, explains in her monograph *Intonation,* after historians had identified writers as the precursors of nationalist politics, they left "culture to the literary critics and return[ed] to their analysis of former nationalist politics."[211] Yet, again and again in interviews and in their memoires, members of the Maghreb Generation emphasized how central poetry, film, and music were to their politicization. "Above all, culture inflamed political imagination," writes Moorman of the role of music in the late colonial Angola.[212] But the relationships between art and politics did not stop there, as demonstrated by the FRELIMO pamphlet above. As men and women became more politically active, they didn't stop making art – instead, the Maghrebi Generation weaponized cultural production. As the revolution took hold of the Mozambican and Angolan *maquis*, argued the FRELIMO, everyone started writing and composing poetry. Like Moorman, Luso-African militant-poets such as Andrade and Dos Santos, argued that culture should not be treated merely as the handmaiden of politics, rather making the revolution was a cultural act *par excellence*.

**Conclusion: The end of *Souffles***

Throughout the preparation of *Souffles*' nineteenth issue, Laâbi and Andrade were in close correspondence, exchanging notes, requesting edits and discussing content. The letters, though to-the-point, bear witness to the intimacy of their relationship through the frequency of the exchanges, the use of the "tu," and the closing "fraternellement." After what appears as a frantic back and forth, Laâbi wrote to Andrade reassuring him that no

[211] Marissa Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), p. 12.
[212] *Ibid.,* p. 7.

matter the limits of this dossier, *Souffles* would not stop with this first round of information about the anti-Portuguese colonial struggle. "In future issues," he averred, "we will attempt (with your help), to give room anytime possible to the liberation struggles in Africa."[213] In fact, as early as February 1971, Laâbi wrote Andrade again asking for help with the twentieth issue of *Souffles*. The *Souffles* team was preparing a report on education and Laâbi was wondering whether Andrade could send him some information on education in the liberated zones of Angola.[214]

Laâbi was never quite able to make true on his promise to Andrade to include more and more Africa-related content. *Souffles* printed another two issues before tragedy struck. In January 1972, the Moroccan government arrested, imprisoned, and tortured multiple members of *Souffles*. The journal's staff had never attempted to conceal its increasingly political bent, and its collaboration with the Moroccan far-left. On the contrary, *Souffles* proclaimed its revolutionary project for all to hear, "without much prudence," wrote Abdellatif Laâbi's wife, Jocelyne, "for prudence was not fashionable, and what could a journal risk? Worst case scenario: a ban, which nobody even thought of!"[215] In September 1973, after a lengthy trial, in which the primary piece of evidence presented against them was a complete collection of *Souffles* and *Anfas*, the judge handed out a verdict: Abdellatif Laâbi was condemned to ten years in prison. "In front of the judge," wrote Jocelyne Laâbi, "the issues of *Anfas* and *Souffles* were piled high, undeniable testimonies to Abdellatif's breach of national security. No other proof was

[213] Abdellatif Laâbi, letter to Mario de Andrade, Rabat, February 5 1971, Arquivo Mario Pinto de Andrade, Fundação Mário Soares, http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07559.001.015#!2.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] Laâbi, *La liqueur d'aloès*, *op.cit.,* p. 128.

brought up against him. For all of them, it was books and paper. Nothing but paper."[216] The Moroccan government banned the magazine and those members who did not end up in jail fled the country. The journal sunk into oblivion.[217]

In 1976, from inside his Spartan cell in the Kenitra prison, from behind "its irreversible door/the jeering jaw of Judas," Abdellatif Laâbi wrote a letter to his friend Mario de Andrade.[218] The letters were affectionate and melancholic, a testament to the importance the men played in each other's life. "Where are you now Mario?" Laâbi lamented, "War, prison, made us lose touch."[219] Laâbi explained that prison did not prevent him from following with close attention the struggles in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea and the fall of Portuguese Prime Minister Marcello Caetano. He thanked Andrade, without whom the Luso-African crusade against the colonial powers would never have "erupted into the Arab consciousness."[220] For it was Andrade who introduced Laâbi to so many brave fighters for the FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC, such as

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[216] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[217] Since the publication of Kenza Sefraoui's excellent dissertation *La revue Souffles (1966-1973) : Espoirs de Révolution Culturelle au Maroc*, the scholarship on *Souffles* has rapidly multiplied. In Morocco, *Souffles* is no longer the taboo that it used to be. Until the late 1990s, it was almost impossible to find copies of the journal, but from 1997 to 2004 two American professors, Thomas C. Spear and Anne George, digitized *Souffles*, and the Moroccan Royal Library uploaded it to their website in 2010. The journal has now entered the pantheon of Moroccan National culture and is being reclaimed by the heir to the Moroccan government that imprisoned and tortured *Souffles'* members. Other scholars have delineated the theoretical and political underpinnings of the *Souffles* editorial board, interviewed its members, and conducted in-depth analyses of the journal's content. Scholars such as Teresa Villa-Ignacio have explored the group's ties to the Black American community; others such as Andy Stafford have analyzed the Third-Worldist tendencies of the journal. See: Thea Pitman and Andy Stafford, "Introduction: transatlanticism and tricontinentalism," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (September 2009), pp. 197-207; Andy Stafford, "Tricontinentalism in recent Moroccan intellectual history: the case of *Souffles*," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (September 2009), pp. 218-232; Teresa Villa-Ignacio, "Decolonizing violence: revolutionary affinities between the U.S. Black power movement and the Moroccan journal *Souffles,*" *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2, (2018), pp.13-33; Marion von Osten, "Aesthetics of Decolonization—the Magazine *Souffles* (1966-1977)," *Asia*, 70 (4), (2016), pp. 1265-1284.

[218] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Cellule de prisonnier," *Sous le Bâillon, Le Poème, (Écrits de prison, 1972-1980),* (Paris : Éditions l'Harmattan, 1981), p. 88.

[219] Abdellatif Laâbi, "Lettre a un ami angolais," *Sous le Bâillon, Le Poème, op.cit.,* p. 139.

[220] *Ibid.,* p. 140.

Marcelino do Santos. It was Andrade with whom Laâbi worked in Rabat and Algiers for the decolonization of the mind and against what Laâbi called "the windup monkeys," the turncoat African dictators who touted a humanism à la European.[221] "Mario, my brother in arms," wrote Laâbi, "My wish is to hold you against me a day, in Luanda in peace, to see in your laughing and intelligent eyes, the joy and gravity that the tasks of rebuilding and the pursuit of the revolution inspire."[222]

It is unclear whether Laâbi and Andrade ever met again. After Laâbi was released from prison, he moved to Paris, where he still lives today. After working with the MPLA up to the eve of Angolan independence, Andrade left the group after disagreements with Agostinho Neto. When Portugal finally gave the Angolan people their independence, Neto proclaimed himself the president, and Andrade settled in Guinea-Bissau. From there, Andrade continued to publish edited volumes of African poetry and preach a vision of Africa that transcended the rigid borders of the nation-state.[223]

The relationship between Laâbi and Andrade testifies to the fact that Morocco did serve as a locus of resistance to colonialism, and as a space to envision what African unity should look like. Their collaboration reveals that the militant-poets of the Maghreb Generation were not content with political decolonization. They fought relentlessly for a utopian form of freedom—a freedom of expression, of the mind, and of movement. Over the two decades or so after its political independence—what I call the longue-durée decolonization—Moroccan, Angolan, Mozambican, and Cape-Verdean militant-poets deployed military and poetic weapons against the colonial regimes, the imperialist

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[221] *Ibid.*
[222] *Ibid.,* p. 141.
[223] "Mario Pinto de Andrade: Obituary," *Times*, London, 28th of August 1990.

Americans and Soviets, and against their own governments when these did not deliver the promised freedom of the postcolonial world. It is precisely interactions with peoples like Mario de Andrade, Amilcar Cabral and the other Luso-Africans present in Rabat in the 1950s and 1960s that drove Moroccan intellectuals, such as Laâbi, to a militancy based on political organizing, as well as, cultural criticism. Through poetry, movement building, and armed resistance, the Moroccans and Luso-Africans created a vision of African unity that far transcended the rigid national or racial solidarities that postcolonial governments enforced - a vision of Pan-Africanism that centered the Maghreb.

# Part II: Algeria and the Pan-African Festival of Algiers

## Chapter 3. *Poésie sur tous les fronts*: Jean Sénac and the Off-PANAF

*"A l'heure de la révolution culturelle, la poésie est un fusil-des-semailles."*[224]

*« In the hour of cultural revolution, poetry is a rifle for sowing."*

- *Jean Sénac, 1969*

### Introduction

According to Algerian writer and actor Hocine Tandjaoui, it was in the summer of 1969, whilst Black American musician Archie Shepp's saxophone crooned in the Place des Martyrs, in down-town Algiers, that many "young Algerians realized they were screaming into a void. All of these pretty people were coming to illustrate, to commemorate an African Revolution that was counterfeit, [...] and we, we contemplated our extreme solitude," he remembered in a December 2017 interview.[225] Many of the suited men and women present at the Pan-African Festival of Algiers' symposium in the western suburbs of Algiers touted their radicalness. The PANAF, they claimed, was the revolutionary festival *par excellence*.[226] In July 1969, not only Algeria, but all of Africa,

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[224] Jean Sénac, "Le rendez-vous de la jeunesse et de l'espérance créatrice, » *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

[225] Hocine Tandjaoui, interview with author, December 18th, 2017, Paris, France.

[226] In fact, participants did not hesitate to compare it to the French-funded World Festival of Negro Arts celebrated in Dakar in 1966 and to highlight the change in rhetoric. On April 1st, 1966, a mere six years after Senegalese independence, André Malraux, the French Minister of Culture, inaugurated the First Negro Arts Festival in Dakar with this notorious phrase: "Here we enter history. For the first time a Head of State holds in his perishable hands the destiny of an entire continent." [Andre Malraux, Speech of Dakar," March 30th, 1966, https://malraux.org/discours-de-dakar-30-mars-1966/]. Primarily funded by UNESCO and by the French government, the Dakar Festival attracted political and cultural personalities from around the globe amongst whom were George Pompidou (French Prime Minister), André Malraux (French Minister of Culture), René Maheu (UNESCO director), Aimé Césaire, Duke Ellington and Langston Hughes. The twenty-four days of dance shows, music, exhibitions, plays, speeches and symposiums intended to prove to the world that Black culture was alive, well and ready to join the *civilization de l'universel* [universal civilization]. Using the Festival as a platform, Senghor made numerous speeches on *négritude*, Art Nègre, Francophonie, and Senegal's relationship to France. He did not, however, invite North African artists to participate in certain events, such as the contemporary art exhibition—only Black artists could present their work. This restrictive aspect of the Festival created numerous tensions. Senegal had asked the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to fund and participate in the organization of the Festival, but the OAU decided to abstain because of the exclusive nature of the event. Many African countries, such as Algeria and Guinea-Conakry, deplored Senghor's championing of an ideology which prohibited a large segment of the continent. Other countries, such as Tunisia, were sympathetic to Senegal's vision of Africa. Where the

it seemed, celebrated Algeria's spectacular revolution and the model the country was setting for decolonized states around the world. The French Chargé d'Affaires at the Festival wrote to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, explaining that after this Festival no one would dare denigrate the foreign policy of the Algerian government: Algeria had established itself as the Mecca of Revolutionaries.[227]

In reality, not all in Algiers were enthusiastic supporters of the Algerian government's bid for Pan-African leadership. To Tandjaoui, only nineteen-years-old in 1969, the PANAF was a masterfully conducted public relations move, smoke and mirrors that left only faint traces. Some fifty years later, in 2016, Tandjaoui still remembered the Festival as a farce:

> In this late spring we resist the syrupy tune
> Of a progressist Algeria organizing
> This razzle-dazzle circus they call panafrican festival
> We are incredulous, dissidents, xerophiles.[228]

Algerian student Boussa Ouadad agreed that the Festival could not possibly change anything about the situation of the Algerian youth—a youth that was suffering a veritable ordeal since Boumédiène's 1965 *Coup d'état.* "All organizations were forbidden,"

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FESMAN championed négritude and Black universalism, the PANAF espoused revolutionary art. For more on this see: Paraska Tolan-Szkilnik, "Flickering Fault Lines: The 1969 Pan-African Festival of Algiers and the Struggle for a Unified Africa" *Monde(s)*, 2016/1 (N° 9) and Samuel Anderson, "'Négritude is Dead': Performing the African Revolution at the First Pan-African Cultural Festival (Algiers, 1969)," in *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and legacies*, ed. David Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 143-160 ; Eloi Ficquet and Lorraine Gallimardet, « « On ne peut nier longtemps l'art nègre » Enjeux du colloque et de l'exposition du Premier Festival mondial des arts nègres de Dakar en 1966 », *Gradhiva,* 10, (2009), pp. 134-155.

[227] Jacques Dupuy, letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Algiers, August 4th 1969, p. 4, N_3_3_1, Dossier Festival Panafricain, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.

[228] Hocine Tandjaoui, "Feuille de Route," in *Une Saison Ardente: Souffles 50 ans après*, (Casablanca: Éditions du Sirocco, 2016), p. 30-32.

Ouadad bemoaned, "the Ciné-clubs were closed, we were muzzled, […] We didn't really believe in this Festival, considering the overwhelming repression we were living."[229]

This chapter begins with the official story of Algiers as the Mecca of Revolutionaries—the culmination of which was the Pan-African Festival of 1969. The chapter then turns to, what I call, the Off-PANAF: the events that occurred outside of the purview of the Algerian state between members of the Maghreb Generation. The chief coordinator of the Off-PANAF was Algerian poet Jean Sénac. Sénac does not figure in any of the articles or official documentation published by the Algerian government around the PANAF. Despite his status as a major figure in the Algerian literary scene, he was not invited to participate in the Festival's Symposium by an Algerian government with which he was on increasingly bad terms. Yet his diary from those ten days in July 1969, contains scribbled notes of dinner dates, concerts, and parties with poets and artists from across the globe.[230] These encounters are much more difficult to reconstitute than the PANAF's main events, as they took place in the shadows, away from William Klein's video-camera and the scrutiny of the press.[231] Sénac organized parties at his house, recorded interviews for his radio show *Poésie sur tous les fronts* [*Poetry on All Fronts*], and scheduled public poetry readings outside of the official program of events.[232]

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[229] Boussad Ouadi, interview with PANAFEST archives, May 13th, 2014, Algiers, Algeria, http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/#PANAF_69-Boussad_Ouadi.

[230] Jean Sénac, Diary July 1969, box S10, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

[231] The Algerian government commissioned French-American film director William Klein to document the Pan-African Festival of Algiers. Klein made a documentary, *Festival Panafricain d'Alger 1969*. The documentary was impossible to find for a long time but has now been re-issued and projected at many film festivals world-wide. At the time, though, many Maghrebi and Black filmmakers resented the fact that the Algerian government had commissioned a European director to make the film.

[232] Jean Sénac, Diary July 1969, box S10, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

This chapter reconstructs the voyages of the Maghreb Generation to Algiers in the summer of 1969, as filtered through Sénac's interpretation and relationship to the militant-poets. In order to recover some of these encounters and their intellectual and cultural repercussions, I conduct a version of Rescue Archeology. I piece together fragments of information from Jean Sénac's archives in Algiers and Marseilles, with testimonies (many in poetic form) published by his guests immediately before and after the Festival. I begin by tracing Sénac's trajectory as a member of the Algerian Resistance, as a favorite of the postcolonial Algerian regime, and finally as a disenfranchised opponent to the Front de Libération Nationale's (FLN) censorship and oppressive rule of law—a trajectory that led him to the sad basement apartment on rue Elysée-Reclue where he was mysteriously murdered on the night of August 30th, 1973. Like other members of the Maghreb Generation, Sénac evolved from a leader of the anti-colonial resistance, to a supporter of the postcolonial government, and, finally, to a disenchanted artist who looked beyond the nation-state for hope in building a radical future.

## The Mecca of Revolutionaries and the Oft-Told Story of the PANAF

### *Algiers: Mecca of Revolutionaries*

"Picture this with me for a minute," described Algerian painter Denis Martinez in an interview in March 2018, "you see here there was this café where we met with Sénac, and then Mario [de Andrade] and his friends would be at this café, and there was also the Tahar Abderrahmane circle, the Brasserie, the Milk Bar and there was the Cinémathèque, all along the street we would circulate and sit outside in the terraces, we would drink and

smoke and talk."[233] For Martinez, reminiscing in his dusty and colorful apartment in Blida, this was the 1960s. He and his friends would hitchhike the fifty kilometers to Algiers, borrow tapes from the Cinemathèque, have coffee with a couple of exiled revolutionaries, and then head back to Blida to show the movie in the main square. As one U.S. journalist, writing for the *New York Times*, observed in 1965 "young African exiles, some with beards or goatees, all with plenty of time for all-night talk, give cafés in downtown Algiers a look of the Left Bank in Paris."[234] Amilcar Cabral famously called Algiers the Mecca of Revolutionaries. When asked to elaborate he reportedly said: "Muslims make the pilgrimage to Mecca, Christians to the Vatican, and Revolutionaries to Algiers."[235] In his 2016 monograph *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order,* Jeffrey James Byrne explores how Algiers became such an appealing place for rebels from such places as Angola, Mozambique, Argentina, Palestine, South Africa, and Vietnam. In Algiers, he reveals, these rebels "lived together, conspired together, and vowed to die together."[236]

As the mid-1960s turned into the late 1960s, whatever revolutionary clout Morocco had earned in the early years of the postcolonial era quickly faded away. Tensions with Algeria had been building up since Morocco's independence, in great part due to the fact that, in the lead up to Moroccan independence, the French and Moroccan governments failed to delineate the desert border between Algeria and Morocco. The French did not believe that such a stretch of arid and dusty land would ever be of much

[233] Denis Martinez, interview with author, March 28th, 2018, Blida, Algeria.
[234] "Algiers, A Haven for Exile Groups," *New York Times*, March 7th, 1965, p.13.
[235] Ben Salama, *Alger : La Mecque des Révolutionnaires* (2016, Arte France).
[236] Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 3.

value. But, when oil companies discovered large seas of petroleum under the desert sands, the land became priceless and the two Maghrebi countries struggled over the exact location of the border.[237] Moroccans, Tunisians, and Algerians had collaborated in their struggles against the French colonial power, the newly independent Moroccan and Tunisian governments even giving the FLN access to various training camps along their Algerian borders. Despite these outward signs of collaboration, the messy aftermath of French colonialism and this question of desert borders made the three Maghrebi countries vulnerable in their national sovereignties. Moreover, the three heads of state, Ahmed Ben Bella in Algeria, Mohammed V in Morocco, and Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia, were very different people, with very different vision for their respective countries, the Maghreb, and the Pan-African project. As early as 1956, behind the bars of his French prison cell, Ben Bella allegedly asserted that a "Sékou Touré [Guinean president] in Morocco and a Modibo Keita [Malian president] in Tunis, that would be perfect for us." Bourguiba and Mohammed V were not radical enough for Ben Bella who believed they were in collusion with the West.[238]

The 1963 War of the Sands started with a series of desert skirmishes along the Algerian-Moroccan desert border. At first it seemed that this struggle would taint Algeria's emergence as a revolutionary power house, because the war invariably turned the Algerian government's attention back to regional politics and away from the Third-World. However, the Algerian government managed to use the war both to strengthen a

[237] William Zartman, "The Politics of Boundaries in North and West Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies 3*, no. 2, (1965), pp. 155-173, p. 163; Pierre Vermeren*, Histoire du Maroc depuis l'imdependance*, (Paris: Editions La Decouverte, 2002), p. 36.
[238] In fact, Ben Bella maintained strong ties with the two men who were the biggest threats to Hassan II and Bourguiba's regimes: Mehdi Ben Barka in Morocco and Salah Ben Youssef in Tunisia; both were assassinated by their respective governments [see Byrne, *op.cit.*, p. 83].

sense of national unity and to blemish Morocco's already dwindling reputation as a revolutionary patron.[239] After the War of the Sands, King Hassan II turned his attention towards Western Europe, and towards Islamic Trans-Saharan solidarities, foregoing the non-alignment of his father and of the Casablanca group.[240]

Algiers was the new place to be. The FLN had fought a drawn out and bloody war with the French—a war which had made the front page of newspapers across the world. The FLN benefited from supreme revolutionary clout. At the first Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Addis-Ababa in 1963, Ben Bella built on this support and furthered the revolutionary rhetoric. "Pushing his notes aside, pounding the podium with both hands, very pale," one attending journalist recorded, "the Algerian leader made an impassioned appeal in a breathless voice for aid to the Angolan rebels… I do not think that I had ever had such a profound sense of African unity as when I listened to Ben Bella, tears in his eyes, visibly moved, urge his listeners to rush to the assistance of the men dying south of the equator."[241]

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[239] Jeffrey Byrne claims that Ben Bella would have told Tito that once he had "pointed out the links between Moroccans and the [Kabyle leader] Hocine Aït Ahmed," the Algerian people had shown his government extraordinary support, "so that now, neither Aït Ahmed nor the defense of borders represents a problem for us." Ben Bella thus used the 1963 War of the Sands to splinter and marginalize Kabyle rebels. [Byrne, *op.cit.,* p. 222].

[240] Pierre Vermeren argues that Hassan II immediately distanced himself from the non-alignment of the Casablanca group, and that the Europeans saw his ascension as a relief, a sure sign that Morocco would be joining the Western camp in the Cold War. Vermeren, *Histoire du Maroc*, op.cit., p. 31.

[241] Byrne, *op.cit.*, p. 196. Created in 1963 in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) consisted of 32 independent African states. There are now 53. The OAU charter declared that the organization's functions were to "promote unity and solidarity between African states; coordinate and intensify cooperation and attempts to ameliorate the lives of the peoples of Africa; defend the sovereignty, the territorial integrity, and the independence of the OAU's member states; eradicate all forms of colonialism in Africa; promote international cooperation all the while respecting the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." [« Organization of African Unity, http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/global/ilo/law/oau.htm]. The first meeting was tense however, divided between two groups with very different visions for the future of Africa. The first group, consisting of Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana and Abdel Nasser's Egypt, was advocating for a United States of Africa. The second group, including the Ivory Coast of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the Nigeria of Tafana Balewa, the Tunisia of Habib Bourguiba, and the Senegal of Léopold Sédar Senghor, consisted of countries who were attached to their national sovereignty and were for a more gradual process of unification. As you can tell

But Algeria was not merely playing a rhetorical game. As Byrne explains, the archives of the Algerian Foreign Ministry "reveal not only the construction of a newly independent country's diplomatic apparatus but also a largely successful effort to translate lofty Third-Worldist rhetoric into a practicable foreign policy doctrine."[242] Algeria turned to Africa first and foremost in order to fulfill that goal. Emerging from a difficult and violent decolonization struggle, Algeria "had arms enough to supply the whole of the Africa continent," explained one U. S. journalist.[243] And supply it did. Few other African countries were willing to support subversive transnational groups to the same extent—particularly in terms of military assistance. Other countries were afraid of diplomatic reprisal, or of undermining their own national sovereignties.[244]

Byrnes ends *Mecca of Revolution* with Houari Boumédiène's successful 1965 coup against the beloved Ahmed Ben Bella.[245] While Third Worldism remained strong in Algeria, Byrne argues that the coup meant the end of decolonization's "most idealistic and optimistic phase. Out of the diversity of political imaginings and spirit of limitless

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from reading the guiding principles in the OAU's charter, the second group prevailed. For more see: Jean Mfoulou, *L'O.U.A., triomphe de l'unité ou des nationalités?: essai d'une sociologie politique de l'Organisation de l'unité africaine* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1986); Zdenek Cervenka, *The Organization of African Unity and its Charter* (New York: Praeger, 1968).

[242] Byrne, *op.cit.*, p. 173

[243] *Ibid.,* p. 189

[244] *Ibid.,* p. 189.

[245] On June 19th, 1965, the inhabitants of Algiers woke up to find military tanks in the streets and army men at every important intersection. In the night the Colonel Houari Boumédiène, and those loyal to him in the Algerian army (Armée de Liberation National, ALN), had arrested Ahmed Ben Bella in his house. The coup was bloodless, and many Algerians believed the tanks were in place to film Pontecorvo's film *La Battaille d'Alger*. Byrne argues that Boumédiène conducted the coup in June 1965, just a couple weeks before the Second Summit of Afro-Asian Heads of States (or Bandung two as it is often called), precisely because by presiding over this summit, Ben Bella would have become the Third World representative *par excellence*, thus making him all-too powerful for Boumédiène and his supporters. Because of the coup, the summit was cancelled. For more on the coup and on Bandung 2 see: Byrne, *op. cit*.; Jeffrey James Byrne, "Beyond Continents, Colours, and the Cold War: Yugoslavia, Algeria, and the Struggle for Non-Alignment," *The International History Review,* Volume 37, Issue 5, (2015), pp. 912-932; James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Peter Saint John, "Independent Algeria from Ben Bella to Boumédiène: I. The Counter-Revolution and Its Consequences," *The World Today*, Vol. 24, Number 7, (July 1968), pp. 290-296.

possibility that had brightened the twilight of empire, a surprisingly homogenous, constrictive and even conservative postcolonial order had emerged."[246] The Third-Worldism that followed Boumédiène's coup, Byrne contends, was entirely directed by the postcolonial state—a state that managed all interactions between the domestic space and the outside world. "In that sense, the profusion of Third Worldist-themed events such as Afro-Asian writers' conferences and Pan-African music festivals," writes Byrne, "reflected a desire to filter every kind of cross-border contact through official international channels, whereas transnational activities that the authorities did not supervise were treated as inherently suspicious."[247]

Byrnes benefited from unprecedented access to FLN archives and has been instrumental in illuminating the diplomatic contacts between the Algerian state and the rest of the Third World before 1965. His story, however, remains a top-down history, a diplomatic history that does not investigate the cultural underbelly of the activity in Algiers. Though Byrnes points to the idea that revolutionaries from the Third World tended to recognize each other through their shared manner and lifestyle, he does not investigate the consequences of this shared lifestyle, the culture that emerged from that "cosmopolitan fauna" in Algiers.[248] For, while the Algerian government could control the ins and outs of revolutionaries in Algiers, they were unable to control the daily interactions between these revolutionaries and the Algerian people. What emerged from this Mecca of Revolution and was staged for all to see during the 1969 Off-PANAF was a very specific revolutionary culture, inspired by the Algerian landscape and ideals of

[246] Byrne, *op.cit.,* p. 286.
[247] *Ibid.,* p. 291.
[248] *Ibid.,* p. 298.

guerrilla violence—a culture of political radicalism articulated through the arts, one that romanticized paramilitary action, at times even encouraging its advocates to drop the pen and pick up an M16 in the struggle against all forms of oppression, be they foreign or domestic.

*The 1969 Pan-African Festival of Algiers*

"When I say that Algiers was the capital of the African liberation movements," clarified Denis Martinez, "I don't mean that it was the capital of African culture, except of course during the PANAF [...] We yearned for Algiers to become a cultural capital, like Paris, [...] for artists to come from all over Africa."[249] In the summer of 1969, the young painter's dream came true. On July 21st, 1969, while the eyes of the world were riveted on Neil Armstrong taking his historic step, five thousand people gathered in Algiers. Not only were representatives from forty African countries present, radicals from around the world flocked to the city to support the country's fight against imperialism. At symposiums, in concert halls and in art galleries, the Black Panthers mingled with Tunisian musicians, Algerian activists and Senegalese filmmakers.

The Pan-African Festival of Algiers (PANAF) was an ambitious project led by the Algerian government and partly funded by the Organization of African Unity. The Algerian president Houari Boumédiène, whose legitimacy as a leader of the Third-World was shaky at best since his 1965 coup, was attempting to grow the regime's base amongst the youth, and to renew Algeria's reputation as a Pan-African and Third-Worldist power. As Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver remembered, "the stern, colorless colonel who

[249] Denis Martinez, interview with author, March 28th, 2018, Blida, Algeria.

replace Ben Bella was virtually unknown outside of Algeria," explaining that "part of Boumédiène's strategy for asserting Algerian leadership on an international level, one plank in his comprehensive program to place Algeria in the political leadership of Africa, the Arab world, and nonaligned nations, was hosting the First Pan-African Cultural Festival."[250] The Festival was also meant to showcase the steps that Algeria had taken towards financial independence after political independence, and to encourage international investments.[251]

At the same time, the Festival enabled the Algerian government to control the Pan-African and Third-Worldist cultural networks emerging in and around Algiers. By organizing the PANAF, Algerian officials could try and manipulate what was already happening in bars and cafés outside of their direct supervision. The Algerian government threw this *fête* with the very clear intent of producing and distributing a certain type of African culture that coincided with their political project. The PANAF was a political-aesthetic project. The culture that the Algerian government was displaying and creating at the Festival was meant to contradict everything that the European powers circulated about culture and the arts. "The occidental idea of culture has gone a long way and has favored a thesis according to which culture is a luxury of the 'over-developed,'" read one pamphlet published by the Algerian government for the Festival, continuing, "and moreover, that its impact and radiance depend on economic and industrial expansion. Which practically goes to say that culture and domination, culture and luxury are

[250] Kathleen Cleaver, "Back to Africa: The Evolution of the International Section of the Black Panther Party (1969-1972", *in The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), p. 218.
[251] Meriem Khellas, *Le premier festival culturel panafricain, Alger 1969 : Une grande messe populaire* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2014), p. 47.

intimately linked."[252] The Algerian government presented its refusal of such a concept of culture. In Africa, the authors of the pamphlet claimed, culture had always had a functional and initiatory role. "Functional from the beginning and an auxiliary weapon later on in our struggle for liberation," the pamphlet announced, "culture today in Africa is indissolubly linked to the development and to the social progress of our peoples."[253] The Members of the Maghreb Generation who attended the Festival, however, did not have faith in the Algerian government's effort to create a culture of and for the people.

This chapter sets itself in contrast to previous scholarship on the Pan-African Festival of Algiers. It gives voice to the Maghreb Generation, many of whom felt that the Festival functioned as a facade, erected to conceal the decaying ideals that had once sustained the Algerian Revolution. In the handful of articles about the Festival, scholars have presented it as a momentous occasion for the continent, as a gathering of revolutionary minds from across the globe.[254] We have tended to serve up the same anecdotes, about the PANAF's iconic moments, such as Archie Shepp's concert, Nina Simone's first rendition of "Ne Me Quitte Pas," the Black Panther Party press conference, Miriam Makeba singing in Arabic, or the dancing parade throughout the streets of Algiers. We have repeatedly implied that the liveliest debate took place in the Palais des Nations between those who espoused négritude and those who abhorred it.[255]

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[252] Pamphlet published by the Algerian government for the PANAF, in Ted Joan's "A Black Man's Guide to Africa," p. 64, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 5: 16-17, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[253] *Ibid.,* p. 65.
[254]Anthony James Ratcliff, *Liberation at the End of a Pen: Writing Pan-African Politics of Cultural Struggle*, Dissertation at UMass Amherst, 2009.
[255] For more information on the organization of the PANAF see: Anderson, "'Négritude is Dead," *op.cit.;* Khellas, *Le premier festival culturel panafricain, op.cit.*; Samir Meghelli, "'A Weapon In Our Struggle For Liberation': Black Arts, Black Power, and the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival," *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt*, Eds. Timothy Scott Brown and Andrew Lison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and Samir Meghelli, "From Harlem to Algiers: Transnational

While there was a spirited debate at the Symposium between these two positions, the narrators of this chapter have time and time again dismissed this debate as passé—a hollow shell. Instead, they emphasized the widening gap between the politicians and the militant-poets, between those who were bound to an institution and those who were free to think and criticize. To them the Festival represented the end of an era of true revolutionary change, one last big hurrah before the descent into censorship and the narrowing of cultural possibilities. This is not to say that they did not enjoy the opportunities the Festival presented; but for the most part, they shunned the official gatherings and stayed in the cafés and bars along the avenue Didouche Mourad, or Jean Sénac's apartment, where they materialized a community of belonging which they had been creating for a decade on paper and through the airwaves.

## Jean Sénac: A Central Figure in the Algerian Literary Scene

*An Algerian insurgent and a pied-noir*[256]

Sénac was born in the region of Oran to a poor woman of Catalan origin who had fled her hometown of Béni Saf after being raped, in order to give birth in anonymity.

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Solidarities Between the African American Freedom Movement and Algeria, 1962-1978," in *Black Routes to Islam,* Eds. Manning Marable and Hishaam Aidi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Paraska Tolan-Szkilnik, "The Quest for a Pan-African Groove: Saxophones and Stories from the Pan-African Festival of Algiers (1969)," *World Art,* (2019), 9:1, pp. 67-80; Tolan-Szkilnik, "Flickering Fault Lines," *op.cit.*

[256] The *Pied-noirs* are the people of French, Italian, Maltese and other European descent who were born in Algeria during the period of European colonialism, from about 1830 to 1962. The majority of *pied-noirs* moved to France immediately following Algerian independence. Some, like Jean Sénac and Denis Martinez, chose to stay, claiming that they were Algerian no matter their origins. For more see: Claire Eldridge, *From Empire to Exile: History and Memory Within the Pied-Noir and Harki Communities, 1962-2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); Amy Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria: Pieds-Noir, Identity, and Exile* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

Sénac grew up feeling excluded from the *pied-noir* population due to his poverty and illegitimacy, he did not "feel of their race."[257] On the contrary, Sénac identified with the working people of Algeria, with Islam, with Arabic, "this stony language," with a country where the "coffee was good […] where the plates were oily and the food red."[258] Perhaps this explains his attraction to the independentist cause, a position that eventually cost him his friendship with his literary father, Albert Camus. The relationship ended, on Sénac's terms, when he criticized Camus for siding with the French instead of with his Algerian brothers.[259] Sénac was a poet, a socialist with an anarchist sense of humor, a lapsed Christian, a homosexual, and above all a prolific writer who penned words on any material he could find, bus tickets, toilet paper, and city walls included.[260]

While in Paris in the 1950s, Sénac joined the FLN, took part in clandestine operations, such as creating the underground *El Moudjahid* newspaper, published the militant *Matinales de mon peuple*, and on the day of Algerian independence, marked his calendar with a brilliant sun.[261] Three months later, in October 1962, he returned to what he considered his rightful nation, ready to take up his responsibilities as a poet of the Revolution. In his 1963 poem "Poème-programme," published in the journal *La*

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[257] Jean Sénac, "La Patrie," Algiers, March 1954, Box 7, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, Francew. For biographical information on Sénac see: Jamel-Eddine Bencheikh and Christiane Chaulet-Achour, *Jean Sénac: Clandestin des deux rives* (Paris: Séguier, 1999); Kai Krienke, *Jean Sénac, Poet of the Algerian Revolution*, Dissertation at CUNY, 2014; Bernard Mazo, *Jean Sénac, Poète et Martyr* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2013); Emile Temime et Nicole Tuccelli, *Jean Sénac, l'Algérien: Le poète des deux rives* (Marseille: Editions Autrement, 2003).

[258] Jean Sénac, "La Patrie," Algiers, March 1954, Box 7, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.

[259] Jean Sénac was a great admirer of Albert Camus and the two maintained a strong relationship for over a decade (1947-1958). Sénac ended the friendship, as the conflict in Algeria escalated, and Camus continued to support the French occupation of their homeland. For more on their friendship see the compilation of letters put together by Sénac's friend Hamid Nacer-Khodja: *Albert Camus, Jean Sénac, or the Rebel Son*, Ed. Hamid Nacer-Khodja (East Langing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2019).

[260] Eric Sarner, "Jean Sénac, poète assassiné," *Revue Ballast*, 12 of November 2014, https://www.revue-ballast.fr/jean-Sénac/.

[261] Krienke, *Jean Sénac, op.cit.*, 2014, p. 26 and Jean Sénac, Diary 1962, Box S10, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

*République*, Sénac appraised the work that lay ahead, listing the spaces in which the revolution needed to persevere (the stadiums, factories, and movie theaters), and emphasizing the popular nature of all postcolonial projects.

> Here
> in Algeria
> because we are writing for a people
> of twelve million
> here
> we will break with the old selfish world
> dust off our soles
> dip our hearts in the fountain
> and sing.
> For an entire people
> that will recognize
> in the stadiums
> at the factory
> in the theaters
> in the douars [villages]
> [...]
> O brothers,
> Algeria the democratic and popular
> is waiting for its poets to speak.
> They are here,
> [...]
> at the front line of the people;
> for them,
> they will give the people's words
> popular fervor.[262]

In the newly postcolonial Algeria, Sénac was celebrated as a revolutionary poet. He integrated Ben Bella's government as a consultant to the Minister of National Education, and helped rebuild the Library of Algiers that had been burned down by the OAS (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète).[263] An enthusiastic supporter of the government,

[262] Jean Sénac, "Poème-programme," *La République*, 13 Décembre 1963.
[263] The Organisation de l'Armée Secrete (OAS), was a secret terrorist organization created by a group of *pieds-noirs* who were determined to keep the French presence in Algeria. The organization committed targeted assassinations and terrorist attacks in Algeria and in France until Algerian independence. For more see: Alexander Harrison, *Challenging De Gaulle: The O.A.S and the Counter-Revolution in Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Marie-Monique Robin, *Escadrons de la mort, l'école française* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004).

he wrote poems glorifying the revolution and exalted socialist self-management with this famous line: "tu es belle comme un comité de gestion" [you are beautiful like a management committee]."[264] Sénac was appointed Secretary of the Union of Algerian writers in 1963, immediately after its creation. Through the Union, Algerian writers hoped to participate fully in the construction of a Socialist Algerian state, and to become the voices of the Algerian masses.[265] One of the Union's principal objectives was to "tighten the links with their brothers of the Maghreb, of the Arab World, of Africa and the Third World, in a revolutionary perspective."[266] But the Union was immediately weakened by the conflicting views of its members, and Sénac quit shortly after Boumédiène's 1965 coup.

Sénac was rapidly becoming aware of the revolutionary front brandished by an Algerian government which was happy to have militant-poets writing on its behalf, but only when they did not demand full freedom of expression. Unlike some of his colleagues in the Union who, according to Sénac, lolled in the comfort of writing for themselves, Sénac demanded that the Union be awarded a budget from the Algerian state, in addition to full editorial independence, so that they may fulfill the mission of continuing the Algerian revolution through their verses. [267] Even after quitting the Union, Sénac continued to work to tighten links between Africa and the Arab world, and in doing so, garnered a significant following. Young writers flocked to him for help, for

[264] Jean Sénac, "Citoyens de beauté," January 1963, Algiers, Algeria, in Jean Sénac, *Œuvres Poétiques*, (Paris : Actes Sud, 1986).
[265] Letter to the President from the Executive Bureau of the Union of Algerian Writers, no date, Box 18, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.
[266] Charter of the National Union of Algerian Writers, Box S2, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[267] Jean Sénac, Letter to the Union of Algerian Writers, Algiers, April 2nd 1967, Box 18, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.

advice, for friendship. Sénac published the first anthology of young francophone Algerian poets in 1971, including many who went on to become renowned Algerian poets.

*Poésie sur tous les Fronts*

From 1969 to 1972, Sénac hosted two radio programs; *Poète dans la Cité* followed by *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*. His shows were immensely popular amongst young Algerians. An August 1971 *El Moudjahid* article lauded the wide-reach of Sénac's show, the unnamed journalist commenting on the fact that on Monday, August 3rd, towards 9:10 PM, he had heard the sound of *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*' opening credits wafting out of a number of apartments in Algiers' projects. "Only great radio shows can compete with the television screen," the journalist remarked.[268] Sénac received boxes of fan mail from young admirers, some only in middle school, asking him to review their poems and raving about how transformative and inspiring his show was. One young man, Mohamed Khodja, told Sénac that he felt himself come to life when he heard the poetry of his brothers "screaming their folly and their misery."[269] Djaffar Ait and Kaci Djerbit, two high schoolers from Tizi Ouzou, wrote to request copies of his shows since the radio was forbidden by their high school. *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, they explained, "allows us to understand the reality that surrounds us and in which we dive body and soul. Russian

[268] "Poésie sur tous les fronts," *El Moudjahid*, August 1971, Box 19, Jean Sénac's archives, Marseille, France.
[269] Khodja Mohammed, Letter to Jean Sénac, June 24th 1969, Algiers, Box S4, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

poetry, Black American poetry, national poetry, never leave us indifferent but penetrate us and put us face to face with problems that we have no right to ignore."[270]

Through his radio show, Sénac helped young Algerians understand that territorial independence was not enough, that they needed to labor on to achieve cultural and intellectual decolonization. As one young French man living in Algiers noted, "all these young people to whom we kept on repeating your country is free, they realized upon hearing Sénac that there were many more chains to break, even in their own consciousness. His voice was a breath of fresh air for an entire generation that was being force-fed empty rhetoric."[271] Hocine Tandjaoui, another young Algerian who discovered Sénac through his radio show, was one of those who had made the "pilgrimage" to Sénac's basement apartment.[272] Tandjaoui remembered Sénac being an inspiration for many young Algerians who were disillusioned with the Algerian Revolution, and the absence of cultural and political possibilities in post-1965 Algeria. "Sénac was important for us," remembered Tandjaoui, "for he was a dissident voice from the beginning."[273] Sénac revealed to a generation of young Algerians that the FLN leadership was not laboring for the promised freedom and equality of the postcolonial world, but instead consisted of a "bunch of puritan-bourgeois" working to line their own pockets.[274]

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[270] Djaffar Ait and Kaci Djerbit, Letter to Jean Sénac 14 January 1968, Tizi Ouzou, Box S14, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[271] Gilles Gauthier, *Entre Deux Rives : 50 ans de passion pour le monde Arabe* (Paris : Éditions Jean-Claude Lattes, 2018), p. 29.
[272] Hocine Tandjaoui, interview with author, December 18th 2017, Paris, France.
[273] *Ibid.*
[274] *Ibid.*

*A poet disowned and assassinated*

Boumédiène's coup had undeniably altered Sénac's relationship with the Algerian government, and his outlook on the Revolution. He did not hesitate to critique what he saw as a slippage into dictatorship, into corruption, as this June 1970 diatribe against the Algerian publishing institution testifies: "the SNED [National Society of Edition and Diffusion] more than ever is filth, and a major crime against the spirit of the revolution, more than ever, dough and cops, censorship, cowardice, incompetence, disaster and bureaucracy of losers. [....] crime! Crime! Crime!"[275] His friends and fellow writers Kateb Yacine and Malek Haddad turned against him, questioning his Algerianity—a sore point for Sénac who constantly felt like an outsider, worried that people saw him as a *gaouri* [an Algerian word for outsider, or foreigner, often French].[276] Broke, Sénac moved out of his house at the Pointe-Pescade and into a basement apartment in Downtown Algiers on rue Elysée Reclue—an apartment which he famously called his "cave-vigie" [basement-watchtower]. In his "cave-vigie" his poetry became increasingly dark. The hope and determination inflecting his earlier poems like "Poème-programme" evaporated, he was left with an overwhelming sense of fear. In a 1971 poem, entitled "Cette Ville," anxiety had taken over Sénac's voice. No longer did he speak for the people; he now spoke of feeling watched, spied upon, and lied to: "In this city/we no longer go out […] the walls can decay/but these looks/this consciousness?/build the

[275] Jean Sénac, Letter to Jean Breton, Algiers, June 9th 1970, Box S7, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[276] Bernard Mazo, *Jean Sénac, Poète et Martyr* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2013). Kateb Yacine (1929-1989) was a prominent Algerian writer, known for his plays and novels (such as *Nedjma*, published in 1956) in French and Algerian Arabic, and for his political activism for the Berber cause in Algeria.

future with what?" Sénac lamented, "mediocrity is the only law/poetry beat to the blood/In this city/we no longer talk/we lie to each other/[…] we are scared."[277]

And indeed, Sénac faced many threats. As early as 1968, some of his friends grew worried for his safety. Patrick Mc'Avoy pleaded with him to move to France, asking him to abandon this "realm of country bumpkins such as Kateb Yacine," and revealed to Sénac that their mutual friend, Jacques, had dreamed that Sénac was being lynched.[278] Yet Sénac never quite gave up hope, as this June 1970 letter to Jean Breton testifies: "Here the fight continues, at the radio, at the university, at the theater, in the street, each second, to save still a little of this revolution, a little poetry, a little beauty, while the gutters invade the beach. With the most generous, the most lucid of us, we try to wash away the pustules, to maintain a true sun."[279]


Painter Denis Martinez's portrait of Jean Sénac, created shortly before Sénac's murder in August 1973. Apparently Sénac never saw it. The drawings of rats reference Sénac's squalid living conditions.

Source: Denis Martinez's Personal Archives

[277] Jean Sénac, "Cette Ville," Algiers, 18 octobre 1971, in Jean Sénac, *Œuvres Complètes, op.cit.*, p.709-713.
[278] Patrick Mc'Avoy, Letter to Jean Sénac December 5th 1968, Algiers, Box S9, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[279] Jean Sénac, Letter to Jean Breton, Algiers, June 9th 1970, Box S7, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

Young French diplomat, Gilles Gauthier, who was living in Algiers at the time commented on the decrepitude of Sénac's living conditions: "at the end of a sinister hallway, there were two small rooms, a kitchen with a sink and as only source of light two windows that gave unto a light well. The floor was covered in books, which we were not allowed to touch." Nevertheless, Gauthier noted, Sénac continued to assemble his radio shows with passion, always in a hurry, navigating with ease between the piles of books in his apartment to find one passage or another. "When I asked him how he could do this that fast," Gauthier wrote, "he would quote this Picasso anecdote: an American was complaining about the price Picasso had set for a piece of tablecloth that he had scribbled on in only five minutes. Apparently Picasso told the American man: yes but it took me fifty years to learn how to do this in five minutes."[280] In June 1972, Sénac's show *Poésie sur tous les fronts* was cancelled by the Algerian government.[281]

Sénac was assassinated in his apartment in the night of August 30th 1973 and quickly buried and forgotten. Though Sénac had wanted to be inhumed in a Muslim cemetery, as he clearly stated in his last will and testament, the Algerian state refused and he was buried instead in a Christian *pied-noir* cemetery in Algiers.[282] The Algerian press refused to announce the date of his funeral, and not a single Algerian official came to pay homage to a man who had fought for Algerian independence and had been part of the government after the revolution. "Nobody wants to talk about Sénac in Algeria," wrote Tahar Ben Jelloun in September 1973.[283] The investigation into his murder led by the

[280] Gauthier, *Entre Deux Rives, op.cit.,* p. 28.
[281] "L'émission poétique de Jean Sénac en Algérie est interdite," Newspaper clipping, June 3rd 1972, Box 19, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.
[282] Jean Sénac, "Testament," Algiers, May 2nd 1973, Box 19, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.
[283] Tahar Ben Jelloun, letter to Jean-Pierre Peroncel Hugoz, Paris, September 15th 1973, Box 15, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.

Algerian government produced no evidence other than a petty crime (potentially linked to his homosexuality—a lover?) and the potential suspect was rapidly released.[284] *El Moudjahid* only published a tiny paragraph announcing Sénac's death. Testifying to Sénac's bearing in the Algerian literary scene, be it Francophone or Arabophone, an Arabic-language magazine, *āl šʿb ālṭqāfy*, published an in-depth and laudatory homage to Sénac, with testimonies from a number of his admirers, calling him the poet of love and freedom, and the poet who shone the light onto the truth.[285]

Rachid Boudjedra, one of Sénac's pupils and friends, wrote: "Jean Sénac was the first victim of Algerian Islamic fundamentalism. He was stabbed to death in an atrocious way in September 1973 because he was a *pied-noir*, because of his French origins. A symbol of multiracial and multi-religious Algeria […] Jean Sénac, the *gaouri,* was assassinated by fundamentalists out of hatred for intelligence and the other."[286] Boudjedra was not the only one to make this assessment; in *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, writer Assia Djebar memorialized him as the first victim in Algeria's long list of assassinated artists during the 1990s "décennie noire," [black decade].[287]

**Jean Sénac as the Chief Coordinator of the Off-PANAF**

To this day many of the members of the Maghreb Generation that Sénac met in the summer of 1969 remember him fondly. "Jean Sénac," René Depestre exclaimed in

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[284] Krienke, *Jean Sénac, op.cit.*, p. 14. Another man was later arrested in September 1973, according to a small article in *El Moudjahid*, resolving "a mystery which had caused much emotion in the intellectual world because of the personality of this poet." "Arrestation du meurtrier du poète Jean Sénac," *El Moudjahid*, Septembre 21st 1973, Box 19, clipping in Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.
[285] « Bʿḍ mā qālwh ʿnh, » *āl šʿb ālṭqāfy*, October 5th 1973, p. 4, Box 19, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.
[286] Katia Sainson, "'"Entre Deux Feux" : Jean Sénac's Struggle for Self-Determination," *Research in African Literatures,* 42.1 (2011), pp. 32-48.
[287] Assia Djebar, *Le Blanc de l'Algérie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995), p. 137-138.

2017, "oh he was a solar man!" "When you meet Sénac, Madam, you respect him," insisted Guadeloupian film director Sarah Maldoror, "he's a fighter, you don't always fight with arms, he fought with his words."[288] Throughout his life, Sénac had labored for the Revolution—the one that would completely liberate his Algerian people and all of the people from Africa. On his death bed, he wrote, he wanted people to dance the twist, "dance breathlessly for Africa the liberated/[…] you will build a culture without races."[289]

If Sénac was a giant on the Algerian literary-political scene, he was equally important in the Pan-African literary world. Mario de Andrade, Amilcar Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, René Depestre, Ted Joans, Sarah Maldoror, Archie Shepp, the members of *Souffles*, all knew and respected him. Much like the members of *Souffles* had struggled to turn their journal into a Third-World and Pan-African revolutionary forum, one independent from state supervision and determined to be the voice of the people, Sénac worked hard to create a space for Pan-African and Third-Wordlist poetry in an Algiers that was becoming increasingly repressive. This was his mission on *Poésie sur tous les fronts*. In the summer of 1969, Sénac's bi-weekly show was an all-Africa affair: from Mario de Andrade and the members of *Souffles*, to René Depestre and the Anti-Apartheid poets.[290] Sénac was determined to give his many listeners a taste of what a radical Pan-African poetic community could look like, outside of the stuffy walls of the PANAF's official symposium. Sénac started each episode of *Poésie sur tous les fronts* with these words: "Algerian brothers, here are your poets. Foreign friends, here are the

[288] Sarah Maldoror, interview with author, Saint-Denis, France, July 28th, 2018.
[289] Jean Sénac, "Quand je serai mort, jeunes gens," Box 21, Jean Sénac Archives, Marseille, France.
[290] Unfortunately, the Algerian National Radio destroyed these recordings when they fired Jean Sénac from his position in 1972.

poets of your people. Together we will live a moment of truth, a moment of trust. For poetry is truth, poetry is brotherly communication, poetry is light and trust, or it is nothing."[291]

*Jean Sénac and the Luso-Africans*

"If I tell you that Africans are born poets, you are going to laugh Madam, but it's true," explained Sarah Maldoror in an August 2018 interview.[292] To Maldoror, Jean Sénac and her late husband, Mario de Andrade, were two such men. Maldoror and her two daughters, Henda and Anouchka, claimed to have spent significant amounts of time with Sénac whilst living in Algiers. Anouchka, still just a child at the time, remembered being particularly impressed by the length of Sénac's beard, and by the poet's assertion that "it was the longest in the world."[293] The Maldoror-Andrade family had been living in Algiers since their move from Rabat in 1966. The FLN had become an important ally to the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and the Algerian government provided the family with a white villa overlooking the sea in Bab el Oued. From there, Andrade organized the resistance to Portuguese colonialism and helped the Algerian government train guerilla fighters.

It is hard to know the nature and extent of Andrade's interactions with Sénac during this time period. Certainly, my interviewees make it sound like the world of revolutionary poetry was a tight-knit community, but few traces are left of the exchanges between various members of these circles, as most of the conversations probably

[291] Jean Sénac, Entrance for the show "Poésie sur tous les fronts," Box S2, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[292] Sarah Maldoror, interview with author, Saint-Denis, France, July 28th, 2018.
[293] Anouchka de Andrade, interview with author, July 17th 2018, Saint-Denis, France.

occurred in cafés or in bars and most of the participants are now dead. I have only found two letters from Andrade to Sénac, in Sénac's archives, but both reveal a familiarity that comes from frequent encounters. In Andrade's archives, I found a careful cut-out of the tiny paragraph in the journal *El Moudjahid* published at the time of Sénac's death.[294] Sénac was assassinated just eight months after Andrade's dear friend, and Anouchka's godfather, Amilcar Cabral was also assassinated. "It was a very hard year for Mario," remembered Henda de Andrade.[295]

Sénac and Andrade first met in Paris, where they both contributed to the journal *Présence Africaine*.[296] It was Andrade who relayed Sénac's message-poem to the 1956 First Congress for Black Writers in Paris—a message signed by a number of other young Algerian writers who stood in solidarity with their Black African counterparts. This was the first of many times Sénac would position himself at the center of solidarity efforts between Algerian and Black writers. This was in September 1956, before Algeria was anywhere near gaining its independence, and whilst other *pied-noir* writers were shying away from making any clear declarations of support for the Algerian struggle. Through this message-poem, Sénac was not only outing himself as a resistor, as an Algerian, as a victim of colonialism, but he was also already working to create a united front with Black artists and poets.

SALUTE TO THE BLACK WRITERS AND ARTISTS

Us, African Writers,
Salute the First World Congress
Of Black Writers and Artists,

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[294] "Algérie," 23rd of September 1973, Mario de Andrade Archives, Fundação Mário Soares, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_85919 (2019-1-8).
[295] Henda de Andrade, interview with author, July 28th 2018, Saint-Denis, France.
[296] Michel Laban (ed.), *Mario Pinto de Andrad e: Uma entrevista* (Lisboa: Ediçoes Jao Da Da Costa, 1997), p. 119.

By the cry of our executed;
The pain of our women
And this crime:
The bitterness of our children.
We salute them by all the blood
Of our people on our words,
By all the black of our people
On our hands of mad frost,
We salute them by the hope
Of our dead and our living,
[...]
Salute them by the response
Of our people to ignorance
By the torn hand of our cleaning ladies,
By the Rebel's fist stirring love
In the bivouac of tears
O brothers! If our syntax itself
Is not a cog of liberty
If our books must still weigh
Upon the back of the docker,
If our voice is not the relay of stars
For the railroader and the shepherd,
If our poems are not also the weapons of justice
In the hands of our people
Let us be quiet!
Black brothers, the Algerian Writers
If they dare raise their voice whilst their brothers fall,
It is to transmit this message of Hope
This little flute of our mountains
Into which liberty rushes
Unites itself to the breath of man
And sings![297]

The "Salute to the Black Writers and Artists," was a rallying cry for poets of the African continent. In the poem, Sénac united all people of Africa around a single experience of pain, and positioned the poet not only as the spokesperson for the oppressed, but also as the voice that could lead people out of their misery and suffering.[298] Sénac took on the color of blackness, "his black hands of mad frost," demonstrating his sense that he and

[297] Jean Sénac, "Salut aux Écrivains et Artistes Noirs," 1956, René Depestre Archives, Limoges, France.
[298] Krienke, *Jean Sénac, op. cit.*, p. 84.

his fellow African poets wrote as one hand - transcribing the message of their peoples. This was very different from Jean Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre*; through his "Salute to the Black Artists and Writers," Sénac positioned himself as an insider, as a Black artist himself, not as an approving European onlooker.[299]

Mario de Andrade read Sénac's message of support to the Congress, and it was he and Frantz Fanon who pushed for a reference to the Algerian War in the final resolution of the Congress.[300] Through his friendship with Fanon and Sénac, Andrade stood by the Algerian cause. This explains why, in his 1961 collection, *Matinales de Mon Peuple*, Sénac wrote a poem entitled "Angola," which he dedicated to Mario de Andrade. "Mario de Andrade, my brother," he began, "I do not forget that at the darkest hour of Algeria's history, you were by our side against the same enemies."[301] The poem described the rotting faces of their common enemy in a manner similar to Césaire in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Sénac wrote of the decaying European civilization confronting, for one last night, the strength that was Africa, that was Angola, that was hope and Brotherhood. Demonstrating his commitment to Angolan independence, Sénac ended the poem with

[299] In his 1949 introduction to Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Anthologie de la Poésie Nègre et Malgache*, Jean-Paul Sartre took the entire poetry of *négritude* under his wing, acting as a self-proclaimed doyen to those he simply called "les poètes nègres." In *Orphée Noir*, Sartre explained to his French audience that European society was hopelessly rotten, that Europe had become a mere geographic accident, "une presqu'île que l'Asie pousse jusqu'à l'Atlantique," and that the future lied on the tongues and lips of the colonized of the world, the wretched of the earth, the *négritude* poets. Sartre proclaimed *négritude* a form of anti-racist racism, a middle-passage between oppression and Marxist revolution. Eventually, he claimed, the Blacks (as he called them) would have to sacrifice their newfound racial pride on the altar of the proletarian revolution.

[300] Laban, *Mario Pinto de Andrade*, *op.cit.,* p. 131.

[301] Jean Sénac, "Angola," *Matinales de mon peuple*, 1961, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

"Black brothers, I salute on your rippling blood/The rogue and generous river of independent Angola."[302]

Unlike Jean Sénac, and because of his close ties to the Algerian government, Mario de Andrade was invited to participate in the PANAF's official symposium in the Club des Pins. At the symposium, Andrade delivered an intervention on behalf of the MPLA, the FRELIMO and the PAIGC.[303] In contrast to many of the other countries' spokespeople who expounded rather vaguely on the role of culture in the current African political climate, Andrade was very clear: "The war of liberation that we are conducting in Angola, Guinea, and in Mozambique, is the only way we can exist culturally." Like Sénac, Andrade believed that the writer's role was to relay the world, the experiences, the "syntax" of the people. Andrade ended his speech with a call to African poets and filmmakers from the recently independent nations to come witness the struggles of their people in the Angolan Maquis and the Mozambican jails. "Where are you?" he asked, "you must come, it is still time!"[304]

In the summer of 1969, Sénac dedicated at least three of his shows from *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, one in July and two in August 1969, to the poetry inspired by Mario de Andrade. Unfortunately, the recordings of the show have been destroyed and the paper traces are limited to a few discontinuous pages, haphazardly stored in a box in the archive. But from the bits and pieces of the show that I've been able to cobble together, Sénac shows a boundless admiration for the work of poets such as Mario de Andrade,

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[302] *Ibid.*
[303] MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), FRELIMO (Mozambican Liberation Front), PAIGC (African Party for the Liberation of Guinea and Cape Verde).
[304] Mario de Andrade, "Intervention commune des mouvements de libération des colonies portugaises," Rabat, *Souffles*, Number 16-17, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 23-5.

Agostinho Neto, Marcelino do Santos, and others. Acting as the relay of the Algerian people, in a continent still quivering with the hope carried by the Algerian revolution, the battle-poetry of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, and Cap Verde, Sénac explained, would break the artificial boundaries of the African continent.[305] "Whether they exalt the heroic gestures of the war, or compose popular songs at the glory of national edification," claimed Sénac, "the poets in either cases are at the forefront of African unity. [...] As such the situation of African poetry at the turn of the 1960s is characterized by a Pan-African thematic."[306]

Despite the fact that Sénac's position in the Algerian political world was becoming increasingly precarious, and despite the fact that he was not fooled by his government's revolutionary rhetoric, Sénac had not quite lost hope for the future of militant-poetic dissent. Through his contacts with poets from across Africa and the Black Diaspora, Sénac tended to the movement of revolutionary poetics by connecting those in Algeria (his audience) that still valued the freedom to express resistance to those in Lusophone Africa who were fighting hand and fist for the freedom to exist.

*Jean Sénac and the Black Francophones*

It was through Mario de Andrade and at the PANAF that Jean Sénac first encountered the Haitian poet René Depestre. In a December 2017 interview, Depestre maintained that he and Sénac were close friends, and wrote each other until Sénac's

[305] Jean Sénac, "Dans le cadre du PANAF: de Lumumba aux Maquis de l'Angola: Le chant armé du peuple," *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*, August 4th 1969, Algiers, Box S2, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[306] Jean Sénac, "Dans le cadre du Premier Festival Culturel Panafricain : De Lumumba aux maquis de l'Angola: Le Chant Arme des Peuples," *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*, August 4th 1969, Algiers, Box S2, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

death, though no traces of their correspondence remain in either of the poets' archives. Sénac knew of Depestre before they met—he had read the Haitian poet in *Souffles* and had received Depestre's *Anthology of Cuban Poetry* in 1967, through Mario de Andrade. "The relays of the revolution are numerous and on all fronts poetry lights up a little more our dream,"[307] Sénac explained when presenting Depestre's anthology on the radio. In 2017, Depestre did not remember much about the PANAF, other than a rather risqué sexual adventure.[308] He did, however, recall that it was the PANAF that brought together the Black African and the Maghrebi writers, and that, he claimed, happened in Jean Sénac's apartment.

While Depestre was close to such figures of the *négritude* movement as Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, Alioune Diop, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, he was not a follower of the *négritude* movement. His poetry certainly drew inspiration from *négritude* literature and developed some of its themes, but to Depestre, *négritude* had become synonymous with the dictatorial regime of Papa Doc Duvalier he fled from in his homeland of Haiti. For Depestre, *négritude* had been an enlightening and nourishing cultural *marronage* that had helped the people from the Antilles gain a better sense of themselves.[309] But by 1969, *négritude* had become the "evil axe of pseudo-decolonization. Négritude [was] papadoquicised to the bone."[310] While the previous generation of *négritude* poets, such as Senghor and Césaire, may have used poetry as a

[307] Jean Sénac, "Poète à Cuba," *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*, August 4th 1969, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[308] René Depestre, interview with author, December 13th 2017, Lézignan-Corbières, France. See chapter 4 for more.
[309] Marronage signifies the process of extricating oneself from slavery, it usually refers to those slaves who escaped the plantations in the Southern US and the Caribbean.
[310] René Depestre, "Fondements socio-culturels de notre identité," Rabat, *Souffles,* Number 16-17, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 30.

way to recover human dignity, Depestre, along with the rest of the Maghreb Generation, stood firmly in the ranks of those who believed that poetry's primary purpose was to bring about the Revolution.

As such, Depestre found solace in the struggles of his friends Jean Sénac and Mario de Andrade. He recognized that the struggle for freedom of speech and against censorship was ongoing in Algeria and stood on the side of those, like Sénac, who defied the government's move to quiet dissent. "Sénac was in the opposition," Depestre remembered, "and he was right, I was very well received, because of my friendship with Fanon, but I lead my own investigation while in Algiers and I saw that the leaders of the FLN were a real mixed-bag."[311] Unlike Sénac, however, Depestre participated in the Festival's official symposium, and his speech was referenced at length by a variety of official channels, such as *El Moudjahid*. At the symposium, Depestre gave a moderating speech about the damages of colonialism and the use of ideologies such as *négritude* in order to regain a sense of humanhood. But after establishing these well-worn positions, Depestre moved on to evoke the dangers that awaited the postcolonial nation. Using Haiti as the illustration of the failure of revolution, he warned his audience against the "indigenization" of the colonial violence. Depestre set Cuba as an example of a successful revolution—a revolution that filtered into all aspects of Cuban daily life and broke the "old animal reflexes that capitalism and racism had implanted in the people's unhappy minds."[312] He argued that there could be no real decolonization if it was not revolutionary, for only through a revolution could the people truly take hold of their

[311] René Depestre, interview with author, December 13th 2017, Lézignan-Corbières, France.
[312] René Depestre, "Fondements socio-culturels de notre identité," Rabat, *Souffles* 16-17, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 31.

history. Depestre thus stood firmly in line with the revolutionary trajectory of countries such as Cuba and Algeria. However, he did bring a sense of empathy that was lacking from many of the Algerian government's official rhetoric. To Depestre a true revolution could only survive through tenderness for the masses, not through dogma or cold isolation from the people. Much like Sénac, for Depestre, love and revolution were intimately intertwined.

Outside of the official lineup of events and dinners, Depestre met with Sénac to record an interview and to prepare two broadcasts of *Poésie sur tous les fronts*. Little subsists of these recordings save their titles and the list of poems Sénac and his collaborators read during the show. In the same way he had used Mario de Andrade to introduce his audience to the world of Lusophone poetry, Sénac used Depestre as a gateway into the poetry and realities of the Caribbean. On September 15th 1969, Sénac aired a show entitled "We do the revolution thus we exist: the great fraternal voice of René Depestre," which included the first part of an interview he had recorded with Depestre on topics as varied as poetry, Haiti, Cuba, surrealism, voodoo, and revolution. On September 22nd 1969, the second part of the Depestre interview aired in a show entitled "Poet in Cuba."[313] In both of these shows, Sénac chose to include some of the most explicitly Third-Worldist of Depestre's poems, such as "L'Âge du Vietnam," an homage to the human victims of war and to the similarities of suffering. Much like Sénac in his "Hommage aux Écrivains et Artistes Noirs," in "L'Âge du Vietnam," Depestre united all of mankind around a single experience of life and a single heart: "Me the man I

[313] Jean Sénac, "Poète à Cuba," *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*, August 4th 1969, Algiers, Box S2, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

have these tides in me/I have my ugliness, my pettiness/my fake gods, my lies sometimes/but somewhere in me, maybe/in my very heart, there is the sea."[314]

In Sénac's correspondence, I found several references to Depestre's poetry. Clearly Sénac's showcasing of the Haitian's poems on *Poésie sur tous les fronts* had garnered some admiration. One such letter was from Hamid Nacer Khodja: "I haven't been listening to "Poésie sur tous les fronts" for long, but I am already a fervent fan. Last week and yesterday I heard and admired René Depestre's beautiful poems… The result, sir, is this: I would be overjoyed if you could send me the unpublished poems of René Depestre. I cannot get them; I do not have the means."[315] This letter marked the beginning of Hamid Nacer-Khodja's lifelong commitment to Sénac and to rehabilitating his memory after his assassination.

Before interviewing Depestre, Sénac had met him at a party on August 2nd 1969 in his "cave-vigie." If one is to believe Sénac's calendar for that week, the party was an all-night affair, the next day the only note in his calendar was "sleep."[316] There are practically no traces left of the conversations that occurred between the many poets present. A single record survives, however, in Jean Sénac's archives; a poster of a poem by Depestre "L'Âge du Vietnam" tagged with the signatures of those present that night. The poster, clearly a gift for Sénac, contains thank yous for the encounters he had facilitated. It was signed by Abdallah Stouky, René Depestre, Mohammed Akmoun, and others whose names are more difficult to read. Some of the tags are clearly inside jokes,

[314] René Depestre, "L'Âge du Vietnam," *Poésie sur tous les Fronts*, August 4th 1969, Algiers, Box S2, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[315] Hamid Nacer Khodja, Letter to Jean Sénac, 23 September 1969, Algiers, Box S14, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[316] Jean Sénac, Diaries, Box S10, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

others simply thank him for a marvelous evening spent with other revolutionary-poets. One note in the margin ties Depestre's printed poem about Vietnam to the revolutions in Algeria and Cuba. Perhaps it is then that Sénac decided to include Depestre's "L'Âge du Vietnam" in his radio show.


"L'Âge du Vietnam," poster-poem by René Depestre signed by those present at the party of August 2nd 1969 in Algiers.

Source: Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers,

According to Depestre, in any case, it was on that same night that he met the group from *Souffles* for the first time, though only Abdallah Stouky's name appears on the poster. At this point, Depestre had already contributed a couple of texts to the nascent journal—texts that he had written within the context of the Cultural Week of Havana (see Chapter 1).[317] But these contributions had been relayed through Mario de Andrade and,

[317] Mario de Andrade, "Réflexions autour du Congrès Culturel de la Havane," and "Culture et Lutte Armée," Rabat, *Souffles*, Number 9, (First trimester 1968).

according to Depestre, it wasn't until the PANAF that he and the *Souffles* group finally met; with the help of Jean Sénac, the Maghreb Generation came together.

*Jean Sénac and Souffles*

In July and August 1969, *Souffles* was still a small publication with a limited distribution; most of those in Algeria who had read issues of the journal had received it from friends. As many of the survivors of that generation melancholically reminisce, copies were shared or dittoed in accordance with the collective ethos that characterized the Maghreb Generation.[318] Sénac had been in contact with the *Souffles* group for a few years and had relayed their message in Algeria. Just a month before the inauguration of the Festival, in June 1969, Sénac had dedicated four consecutive broadcasts to the young Moroccan poets of *Souffles*. Under the general title "Les Poètes de la Revue *Souffles*," Sénac delineated the principal poetic and theoretical concepts of the literary journal. He insisted on the originality of this group, open to exchanging ideas—a group that questioned "the deepest foundations of their souls" and of that of the Arab world.

In introducing *Souffles*, Sénac listed what he considered to be the journal's founding texts. To Sénac, Mario de Andrade and René Depestre's contributions figured alongside Laâbi's prologue as the ideological cornerstones of the *Souffles* project. Sénac cast *Souffles* as the advent of a community, civilization, and way of thinking, that he, along with Marx, Rimbaud, and Fanon, had long yearned for. This was a community similar to the one he was building through *Poésie sur tous les fronts*—a community of militant-poets from across the Black Atlantic that could not, would not, settle for an

[318] Hocine Tandjaoui, interview with author, December 18th, 2017, Paris, France, and Hocine Benkheira, interview with author, February 19th, 2018, Paris, France.

authoritarian nation-state and the perpetuation of imperialism by indigenous state officials. This was the Maghreb Generation.

Sénac worked hard to not only broadcast, but also physically bring together the members of the Maghreb Generation. Hence, when the editorial board of *Souffles* set off on the long desert road to Algiers in the summer of 1969, they moved toward a community of belonging already in formation on the radio waves, if not yet on the streets and in the cafés. Six of *Souffles*'s members traveled to Algiers in July 1969: Tahar Ben Jelloun, Abdellatif Laâbi, Jocelyne Laâbi, Toni Maraini, Mohammed Melehi, and Abdallah Stouky. In a January 2018 email, Toni Maraini recounted a long, tiring, and beautiful car journey to Algiers that culminated in a euphoric messy arrival to the city. She, her husband - the painter Mohamed Melehi - and Abdellatif Laâbi, had come mostly to meet with other artists of the Maghreb Generation, (such as Jean Sénac and the painter Mohammed Khadda), to distribute a catalogue Melehi had made of young Moroccan painters, and to meet with potential collaborators to *Souffles*. They did attend a few events, however, such as the projection of Ousmane Sembène's movie *Le Mandat*.[319] But the Festival came with its load of controversies, Maraini noted, perhaps unavoidable in the foundation of a true Pan-African community.

Maraini's husband, Mohammed Melehi, preserved a bleaker image of their time in Algiers: "we went to the festival, there were Algerian cops beating up Africans in front of the Hotel Aletti. I have only this memory, for the Africans were the honored guests. [...] I was scandalized, this arrogance shocked me. I'm not sure Algiers was ready for this festival. It was only for show."[320] A show, which, according to Tahar Ben Jelloun,

[319] Toni Maraini, email interview with author, February 4th, 2018.
[320] Mohammed Melehi, phone interview with author, January 31st, 2018.

revealed the inability of the Algerian government to deconstruct the imprint of colonialism. A few months later, the young poet commented on the city's decoration, describing the effort as one "of incredible mediocrity, Africa viewed by colonial Europe of the turn of the century."[321] In a 1970 letter to the Algerian poet Hocine Tandjaoui, Abdellatif Laâbi also admitted his disappointment with the trip. He and the other members of *Souffles* hadn't come for the Festival, it was the last of their preoccupations, but to meet Algerian comrades who could help with the journal, yet everybody was busy and he had "had enough of pretty speeches and made-in-Africa beats."[322] The members of *Souffles* that attended the PANAF publicly and privately expressed doubts about the revolutionary potential of such an event.

In January 1970, *Souffles* published an entire issue dedicated to the Pan-African Festival of Algiers, with a split cover page featuring a Black musician on one side, and a military man fleeing from an explosion on the other. The cover played into the rhetoric of the Festival—an event meant to aesthetically knit together resistance and culture, art and revolution; rather than actually incubate a culture of resistance and revolutionary art. Complete with excerpts from the symposium speeches, the Black Panthers' Ten Points Program, an interview with Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène, book reviews, the issue is one of the most thorough coverages the Festival received outside of Algeria.[323] Following in Sénac's footsteps, the group from *Souffles* decided to focus on Mario de

[321] Tahar Ben Jelloun, "Entretien avec Sembène Ousmane," *Souffles,* Number 16-17, Rabat, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 51.
[322] Abdellatif Laâbi, Letter to Hocine Tandjaoui, author's possession, Rabat, January 1st, 1970; Abdellatif Laâbi, interview PANAFEST archives, May 10th, 2012, Paris, France.
[323] *Souffles,* Number 16-17, Rabat, (4th trimester 1969).

Andrade and René Depestre's contributions to the symposium, which they reproduced in full and accompanied with pictures of the two men.


"Algiers: Pan-African Cultural Festival."

Issue 16-17 of *Souffles,* 4th Trimester 1969.

Source: Éditions la Croisée des Chemins

Apart from Depestre and Andrade's contribution, however, the editors of *Souffles* were not enthusiastic about the official events of the PANAF. By lauding the interventions of the Guineans, MPLA, Depestre, and the Black Panthers, they set themselves to the left of the Algerian government's official rhetoric and showed signs of hesitation and their doubts about the true intentions of the African and Maghrebi governments. To the members of *Souffles,* there were insurmountable divisions between the various African regimes. What the young poets and painters of the Maghreb Generation were interested in were the meetings outside of the official events with militant intellectuals from Africa and Latin America—these were the encounters that allowed them to start a dialogue, encounters such as those fostered by Jean Sénac. To the editors and writers of *Souffles,* artists had an essential part to play in society, not as isolated human carriers of truth or as spokespersons for their government, but as militant-artists entrusted to relay of the voices of the oppressed.[324]

[324] Tahar Ben Jelloun, "Souffles, arts," *Souffles,* Number 16-17, Rabat, (4th trimester 1969), p. 46.

Of all those present at the PANAF, it was the group of Black American poets and thinkers that most impressed the members of *Souffles*. To Abraham Serfaty, Black American culture was a model of culture for humankind. Black Americans, had "been submitted to the worst and longest of oppressions" and yet, he marveled, "they emerged as accusers and renovators, as combatants and constructors."[325] One of the most appealing aspects of the Black American struggle, Serfaty felt, was their pragmatism and their contact with the reality of the world. In his two-page article "Salute to the African-Americans," Serfaty denigrated those who, "pretentious enough to invest themselves with the quality of specialists in revolutionary integrity," forgot Lenin's famous reference to Goethe in April 1917, "Grey is theory, my friend, and green the eternal tree of life."[326] The Black Americans, Serfaty explained, were smart enough to know that the only color that mattered was green, not grey, white, or black. They knew that resolving the issues of US society relied on a deep reflection on the historical process of economic, social and cultural stratification and not on a theoretical, mystical or racial reality. To Serfaty, these men and women should become the African Revolutionaries' tutors, for their experience of trauma had made them lucid.

*Jean Sénac and the Black Anglophones*

Sénac was also a great admirer of Black American poets and revolutionaries. In July 1967, he had already conducted a two-part radio show on the Black American poets, entitled "The Great Protest of the American Poets of African Descent." The first part,

[325] Abraham Serfaty, "Salut aux Afro-Américains," *Souffles,* Number 16-17, Rabat, (4th trimester 1969), p. 33.
[326] Abraham Serfaty, "Salut aux Afro-Américains," *Souffles,* Number 16-17, Rabat, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 33.

"Misery," presented the poetry of slavery and of suffering. "You, listener friends, listen to the voice of those that come from Black America. They tell us of pains that you know for having lived them," Sénac began.[327] He drew the parallel between the second-class status of Algerians during French rule, and that of Black Americans in the United States. Beginning with a letter-poem by former slave Phillis Wheatley and ending with a long form prose-poem by Margaret Abigail Walker, Sénac revealed the sufferings and longings of Black American poets, the pain and loneliness that life in the United States entailed. Sénac chose poems that brought together Africa and the US, the suffering of the past and that of the present. Poems such as Langston Hughes "The Weary Blues," where Hughes compared skyscrapers to palm trees:

> Afraid
> We cry among the skyscrapers
> As our ancestors
> Cried among the palms in Africa
> Because we are alone
> It is night,
> And we're afraid.[328]

Sénac cited another poem that evoked Africa through references to palm trees—William Warin Cuney's poem "No Image," about a Black woman who did not know her beauty:

> If she could dance naked under palm trees
> And see her image in the river she would know
> Yes, she would know
>
> But there are no palm trees in the street
> No palm trees in the street

[327] Jean Sénac, "La grande protestation des poètes américains de descendance africaine : La misère," *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, September 11th 1979, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[328] Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues," in Jean Sénac, "La grande protestation des poètes américains de descendance africaine : La misère," *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, September 11th 1979, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria

And dishwater gives back no images.[329]

Through these excerpts Sénac attempted to guide his listeners through the central trauma of the Black American experience: not knowing who or where one was because of the experience of have been forcefully removed from one's land and enslaved. To Sénac, this experience was similar to that of the Algerians who had been intellectually and emotionally colonized by the French until they knew not who they were, or where they were from— "for we do not come from the Gauls/our ancestors were eaten away at by the sun/and their pore were punctured by the winds of the desert."[330]

The second part of Sénac's show on American poets of African descent was entitled "Révolte." In this second episode, Sénac cited Black American Pan-African activist Stokely Carmichael at length. Carmichael was in Algeria at the time. A guest of the Algerian government, Carmichael was vocal in his disdain for US Imperialism. His trip was avidly covered by *Révolution Africaine* and *El Djeich* and Carmichael himself remembered being treated like a *rais* (head chief).[331] Algeria was open to Carmichael's reading of power. "The former slave, the ever-marginalized citizen no longer responds to oppression through blues but through "black power" and, in the same movement, joins the international struggle against imperialism and all manners of alienation," read Sénac's translation of Carmichael.[332] For far too long, Western white society had imposed its own heroes upon colonized peoples. Now, Sénac and Carmichael continued in tandem, the

[329] William Cuney, "No Image," in Jean Sénac, "La grande protestation des poètes américains de descendance africaine : La misère," *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, September 11th 1979, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[330] Sénac, "Jadis l'instituteur," *Œuvres Poétiques, op.cit.*, p. 277.
[331] Stokeley Carmichael cited in Peniel E. Joseph, *Stokely: A Life* (New York: Civitas, 2014), p. 216.
[332] Stokeley Carmichael in Jean Sénac, "La grande protestation des poètes américains de descendance africaine : La révolte" *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, September 11th 1979, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

Black people were engaged in a struggle to find new heroes, such as Malcolm X, Du Bois and Fanon—the very Fanon who had led the Black American people to Algeria.

Through this cry to revolt and with figures like Stokely Carmichael and poets like Ted Joans, Sénac explained, the people of Harlem had finally joined the people of Algiers, Havana, Hanoi, and Conakry in the global fight against imperialism and in the family of the Black Atlantic. To Sénac, and to all those he admired in the Black Power Movement, this fight was not a somber march towards victory, but a dance, as Sénac's reading of Ted Joans poem testified: "Le moment est venu pour tout le monde de swinger (la vie n'a as pas de sens si elle n'a pas de swing) oui c'est bien vrai" [The moment has come for everyone to swing (life does not have meaning if it has no swing) yes it is quite true].[333] Unlike the *Souffles* editors who felt some discomfort with the term "négritude," and more generally had a difficult time identifying with the concept of "blackness," Sénac showed no such resistance. To Sénac, the Black Power Movement was inspiring for its mix of guerilla warfare and cultural resistance—it was a movement in which Sénac felt he belonged.

Less than a year later, in an April 8th 1968 show, four days after Martin Luther King's assassination, Sénac once more reached out to Black Americans, comparing the assassinations of MLK and Malcolm X to those of Ali la Pointe and Mouloud Feraoun.[334] Opening with Léopold Sédar Senghor's homage to the Senegalese soldiers who died for France in World War II, Sénac not only mourned the death of all Black people alongside

[333] Ted Joans, in Jean Sénac, "La grande protestation des poètes américains de descendance africaine : La révolte," *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, September 11th 1979, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[334] Mouloud Feraoun was an Algerian writer. He was assassinated by the OAS on March 15th 1962 in Algiers. See José Lenzini, *Mouloud Feraoun - Un écrivain engagé* (Paris : Actes Sud, 2013). Ali la Pointe was an Algerian fighter in the FLN. He was killed by the French Army during the Battles of Algiers, a scene that was made famous by Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*.

the United States' great pacifist Black leader, but reminded his audience that the only way forward was through violence, or others would lie dead along the roads like "svelte poplars."[335] Like many Black Americans in April 1968, Sénac saw MLK's assassination as a call to violence; "to the question: "the voting slip or the gun?" the assassins of Malcolm X in 1965 and those of MLK have just given us an answer," cried Sénac. The world revolution and the power of the guerilla had entered the heart of the United States, Sénac continued, claiming that Che Guevara's portrait illuminated homes from Harlem to the U.S. South. To Sénac, MLK's death represented a rallying cry for the Pan-African revolution—while people like MLK, Mouloud Feraoun, or Senghor may have been a poetic and political inspiration, their message of peace and non-violent activism rang false in 1968 with MLK's body still warm in the grave.

Thus, by July 1969 and the opening of the PANAF, Sénac was already well acquainted with the Black American poetic scene and with many Black American activists. He had probably met Stokely Carmichael and Miriam Makeba on one of their trips to Algeria. In fact, in November 1969, while embroiled in a bureaucratic mess with the Algerian government over obtaining his Algerian citizenship, Sénac complained that they had given it easily to such people as Miriam Makeba.[336] Sénac likely read the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, published in French by Maspero Editions in 1968, as it appears in his personal book collection at the Algerian National Archives. While he may have been well acquainted with the ideas of the Black Power Movement, it is hard to tell

[335] Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Assassinats," in Jean Sénac, "La grande protestation des poètes américains de descendance africaine : La révolte," *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, September 11th 1979, Algiers, Box S6, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[336] Jean Sénac, Letter to Mohamed Bejdaoui, 30 November 1969, Algiers, Box S7, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.

whom exactly Sénac met in July 1969. Many Black American poets and activists were present and the possibilities for encounter were as numerous as they were fleeting. Sénac probably attended Eldridge Cleaver's presentation, as his journal and the copies of the *Black Panther Journal* in his archives would testify.

One Black American artist that Sénac did befriend during the PANAF was the Free Jazz poet Ted Joans. Their friendship lasted until Sénac's death. Ted Joans wrote Sénac twice from Marrakech in January and February 1972 promising to visit Algeria soon and asking for news. In his second letter (dated 1972), he thanked Sénac for his *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie algérienne*, which he read with an English-to-French dictionary. He explained that he hoped to meet young poets like Rachid Boudjedra, Laadi Eflici, and Hamid Skif—who is "really swinging sensually"—on his visit to Algiers in February.[337] He told Sénac that jazz was a weapon, that jazz was the same thing as Black Power, and that his poetry was based on that understanding. Finally, he signed with a short poem in French: "Si un jour tu aperçois un homme/en marche dans une rue bondée/ et qui se parle à haute voix/ne t'en va pas en sens inverse/cours vers lui car c'est un poète/Ted Joans et tu n'as/rien à craindre du poète/sinon la Vérité" [If one day you should see a man/walking down a crowded street/talking to himself/don't run in the opposite direction/run towards for he is a poet/Ted Joans and you have/nothing to fear from the poet/other than the Truth.][338]

These multiple encounters with Black American poets, in books and in real life, had a significant influence on Sénac's perception of the role of music and poetry in the

[337] Ted Joans. Letter to Jean Sénac, Marrakech, January 1972, Box S15, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[338] *Ibid*.

fight against oppression. Like the members of *Souffles*, Sénac admired the generosity of the Black American artists and thinkers for the downtrodden. In the poets of the Black Power Movement, Sénac saw a sense of tolerance and acceptance that he sometimes missed at home. "By placing the demands of homosexuals, women and all the oppressed of the third world on the same plane, Huey Newton and the Black Panthers swept up away in one fell swoop the obstacles and taboos that mutilate our societies," Sénac marveled.[339] The Black American poets embodied the diptych so central to Sénac's life: Love and Revolution. This is clear in Sénac's "Ode to African-America," written from Algiers in November 1970.

> ODE TO AFRICAN-AMERICA
>
> Free Man smokes. He blows his smoke into the mouth.
> [...]
> We are not black-white I am beautiful because
> I am black I am beautiful because I am white We are beautiful
> Blood is the color of Jericho roses,
> [...]
> Free man speaks. Between his hands a fabulous geography is born.
> [...]
> Free man watches. [...]
> Watches the black, the woman, the homosexual, the druggy, the white, the green, the blue. Free Man
> Stares into the iris of man's destiny,
> Leads him to the crest of fire. Under
> The cobblestones the beach. Thank you Comrades! Free man
> Smokes. And Ho and Mao and Che and Palestine
> And Crazy Horse
> And November and May the zodiac
> Of autogestion and E = mc2 the
> Goodness of Einstein and Char and Fanon
> And Artaud and
> Angela who holds the thread of the Minotaur
> And Genet on all the chests and all the fleeces of all the freedoms

[339] Jean Sénac, interview with Jean Peroncel-Hugoz, *L'Afrique littéraire et artistique*, cited in Hamid Nacer-Khodja, *Jean Sénac : Critique Algérien* (Alger : Éditions El Kalima, 2013), p. 528.

> And Ginsberg and Voznessenski and Ted Joans and Retamar and Guillen and Hikmet and Patrick Mac'Avoy and Sonia Sanchez and Depestre and Blas de Otero and Darwich and Khaïr-Eddine and Adonis and Cernuda and Whitman and
> The electronic tam-tams the song the percussion all
> The song of Reason and of Poetry and
> The Folly of sweet lips of buttered bread on the hearts of the children of Archie Shepp
> In the embers between his three fingers
> Testifies [...]
> And the great raft of America in tears drifts in the fascinated oriental night fuming rears and dislocates. Free Man
> Sings. On his lyrical thighs
> The poem is no longer a sob.[340]

Once again, Sénac easily took on the mantel of Blackness, repeating with glee "I am black I am beautiful."[341] Sénac identified with the community and geography the Black Americans had built—the community that included the "homosexual, the druggy, the white."[342] Perhaps it was his homosexuality that allowed Sénac to fully identify himself with the concept of Blackness. Unlike the members of *Souffles* who were marginal by choice, through their political positions, Sénac suffered from the patriarchal and heteronormative nature of postcolonial Algerian society. There was something empowering to Sénac in the message of the "Free Man," and in the community of poets that surrounded him. "Ode to African-America" was an enumeration of those that influenced Sénac's poetic life, of the voices that he carried around in his head and with which he presented the Algerian people twice a week from 9pm to 9:15PM in his radio show, *Poésie sur tous les fronts.* This poem was a perfect illustration of the ways Sénac brought together the poets of the Maghreb Generation, in a mess of languages and sounds, in the cafés and in his apartment, and in the corporality of mouths and thighs.

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[340] Jean Sénac, "Ode à l'Amérique Africaine," 22nd of November 1970 to the 22nd of February 1972, Algiers, in Sénac, *Œuvres Poétiques, op.cit.,* pp. 293-294.
[341] *Ibid.*
[342] *Ibid.*

**Conclusion: The End of the Era of Revolutionary Poetics**

In his interview in December 2018, Hocine Tandjaoui claimed that the PANAF was organized "just for the pictures."[343] The Algerian government needed to reassert its revolutionary clout on the international scene, and, at the same time, wanted to control the culture of militancy that was emerging from its cafés and cinemas. However, as this dissertation demonstrates again and again, it was impossible for these nascent Maghrebi governments to control all the interactions between members of the Maghreb Generation. And so, alongside the Official PANAF, people like Sénac, Depestre, Andrade, Joans, and Laâbi met at the Off-PANAF. Through these meetings, these militant-poets asserted that the divisions on the African continent were not between "Black" and "White" Africa, but between the state and the people, between those who were working for a free society and those who were searching for power. Through radio-shows, dinner parties, and public poetry readings, these militant-poets of the Maghreb Generation created a community that transcended the official channels of the PANAF, as well as the artificial boundaries between nation-states.

The ultimate fate of these poets demonstrates the very real threat that they posed their nation-states. In the decade following the PANAF, Sénac and Cabral were murdered, Laâbi imprisoned, Depestre kicked out of Cuba for speaking out against Fidel Castro's authoritarianism, and Andrade marginalized by the new Angolan state. Ultimately, of those that survived, many moved to Paris. After Rabat, Algiers too lost its status as the Mecca of Revolutionaries. The Pan-African Festival of Algiers became the prime illustration of the apex of Algiers' Pan-African and Third-World status. But what

[343] Hocine Tandjaoui, interview with author, December 18th, 2017, Paris, France.

remains of the Festival is primarily the Algerian state's narrative in the form of pamphlets, government-sponsored newspapers articles, and reports from the Festival's symposium. The differing accounts in this chapter and the next unearth the many tensions at play in the underbelly of the Mecca of Revolution. They also reveal that at the very moment when African states were busy reinforcing their national identities, a number of artists and militants from the postcolonial world ignored their governments' call to protect the nation-state and created a transnational network that undermined the very foundations of these new nations. These are important narratives, as they demonstrate that the hardening of national borders, the construction of the nation-state, and the expansion of capitalism, that followed decolonization were not inevitable processes, but that people, like Joans, Andrade, Laâbi, Sénac, and Depestre proposed an alternative world every step of the way.

Through the creation of journals such as *Souffles*, or radio-shows such as *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, the Maghreb Generation built a worldwide movement that imbued poetry with incredible revolutionary potential. Throughout the 1960s, the movement took strength from all of the voices that joined it from the US and the African Diaspora worldwide. But in the decade following independence this revolution of poetry increasingly ran up against powerful postcolonial forces that attempted to consolidate the new nations and perceived poetry as a threat to the nation-state.[344] And so, these poets were silenced. But the Maghreb was not finished being the home of artist-militants from across the globe. With Sénac buried, and the *Souffles* members in prison, a number of

[344] Krienke, *Jean Sénac, op.cit.*, p.62. Krienke argues that the silencing of voices of dissent through poetry was a worldwide phenomenon linked to the cultural Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

militant-artists turned to film and started gathering every couple of years in Tunis for the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage.[345]

[345] See Chapter 5.

## Chapter 4. Collecting Bosoms: Sex and Race at the PANAF

*"There is nothing to fear from the poet*
*Other than the Truth"*[346]

- Ted Joans to Jean Sénac, 1972

### Introduction

In her recently published autobiography, *Algiers: Third World Capital*, Elaine Mokhtefi describes working closely with the International Branch of the Black Panther Party in Algiers. In the spring of 1969, Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver, fleeing a U.S. government intent on putting Eldridge in jail, absconded to Cuba and then to Algeria. They arrived in Algiers a couple of days before the start of the Pan-African Festival. The Algerian government extended an invitation to the militant couple, and Algiers became the headquarters of the International Division of the Black Panther Party from 1969 to 1972. Eldridge and Kathleen attracted a host of other Panther members who moved to Algiers, toddlers in tow, and filled the Pointe-Pescade house the Algerian government had provided.[347]

Despite their desire to collaborate with the Algerian government, Mokhtefi notes, the Black Panthers were highly visible, at times controversial, guests in a "shaded, conservative environment."[348] According to Mokhtefi, the Panthers refused to

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[346] Ted Joans. Letter to Jean Sénac, Marrakech, January 1972, Box S15, Jean Sénac Archives, Algerian National Library, Algiers, Algeria.
[347] For more on the Black Panthers' presence in Algiers see: William Klein, *Eldridge Cleaver: Black Panther*, Office National du Commerce et de l'Industrie Cinématographiques, 1969; Meriem Khellas, *Le premier festival culturel panafricain, Alger 1969: Une grande messe populaire*, (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2014); Samir Meghelli, "'A Weapon In Our Struggle For Liberation': Black Arts, Black Power, and the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival," in Timothy Scott Brown and Andrew Lison (ed.), *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and Samir Meghelli, "From Harlem to Algiers: Transnational Solidarities Between the African American Freedom Movement and Algeria, 1962-1978," in Manning Marable and Hishaam Aidi (eds.), *Black Routes to Islam*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Paraska Tolan-Szkilnik, "Flickering Fault Lines: The 1969 Pan-African Festival of Algiers and the Struggle for a Unified Africa" in *Monde(s)*, 2016/1, N° 9, pp. 167-184.
[348] Elaine Mokhtefi, *Algiers, Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers*, (London: Verso, 2018), p.167.

acknowledge the power imbalance between themselves and the Algerian political hierarchy. They repeatedly underestimated their hosts and measured their power against the authority of the Algerian government, she remembers. They barely spoke French (and even less Arabic), did not venture beyond the boundaries of the city, they did not read the Algerian press or listen to the local radio. Their knowledge of Algeria, a country which they had idealized from afar, was almost exclusively based on Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 *The Battle of Algiers*, on Frantz Fanon's texts, and on Malcolm X's speeches. "They had no perspective on the colonial past in Algeria," Mokhtefi continues, "the ravages of the war, or the profound underdevelopment that the regime was attempting to tackle."[349]

Speeding down Didouche Mourad street in a shiny red convertible, accompanied by Algerian women, the Panthers didn't always make a good impression.[350] Mokhtefi describes the romantic and sexual relationships Eldridge Cleaver and some of his fellow Panthers pursued with young Algerian women. Mokhtefi claims that women were the only Algerians that visited the Panthers at the Pointe-Pescade, and the Panthers never visited Algerian homes. According to Mokhtefi, women were, thus, the only window into Algerian culture for the Panther men. Algerian Boussa Ouadad, a twenty-year-old college student at the time of the PANAF, also remembered being shocked by the Black Americans' behavior, particularly towards Algerian women: "They were so American. They walked around the Casbah, half naked, they behaved with the girls in ways that we found insufferable, that was their GI side."[351]

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[349] *Ibid.*
[350] *Ibid.,* p.105.
[351] Boussad Ouadi, interview with PANAFEST archives, May 13th 2014, Algiers, Algeria, http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/#PANAF_69-Boussad_Ouadi.

Most of the stories in the previous chapters center on communion—moments when artist-militants of the Maghreb Generation came together to challenge the Cold War World Order, to defy their own repressive governments, and to work towards the freedom promised by the postcolonial world. This chapter, however, is concerned with radical miscomprehension. Through a series of testimonies by Black American beat-poet Ted Joans, Haitian poet René Depestre, Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver, Ivory-Coast actor Bitty Moro, and a number of Algerian participants, this chapter untangles the many deeply entrenched stereotypes at play between members of the Maghreb Generation. Focusing on encounters that happened in and around Algiers in the summer of 1969, I demonstrate that, though members of the Maghreb Generation labored to surpass racism, racial stereotypes surfaced nevertheless, particularly when it came to the question of women. Indeed, the Maghreb Generation's culture was a masculine one—a culture in which women were only invited to participate as sexual objects or as avatars of their nation, their land, or their race.

The first part of the chapter focuses on how the Algerian people and the Algerian government navigated the changing racial landscape of Algiers in July 1969. Many participants remembered the PANAF as the extraordinary moment when Algeria unearthed its African identity. In reality, however, this African self-discovery faced a number of hurdles, not least of which were the legacies of the Trans-Saharan slave trade. Indeed, at the very same time as they were arguing that the PANAF took place in an atmosphere of camaraderie, just as they claimed "we were all Africans," Algerian

participants and spectators divulged remarks indicative of the differences, in their minds, between North and Sub-Saharan Africa, or between "White" and "Black" Africa.[352]

The second part of the chapter focuses on the experiences of Black Americans at the PANAF, in particular Ted Joans, and to a lesser extent, Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver. Black Americans, like the Cleavers and Joans, were in the habit of understanding the world in Black and White terms in accordance with a US society which was organized around a racial dichotomy rather than a racial plurality. Hence, Black Americans sometimes misunderstood or oversimplified the linguistic, ethnic, and political tensions at play in Africa. Having nursed visions of Africa since their youth, they had to recalibrate the myth in their heads to reality, and sometimes failed to do so, bewildered by the materiality of life and identity in the Maghreb.

Moving away from the political and diplomatic currents at play in Algeria of the 1960s, this chapter lingers on the social, cultural, and carnal underbelly of the Mecca of Revolutionaries. My narrators, primarily artists, expressed emotion in a way that people like Fidel Castro, Ben Bella, and Houari Boumédiène never did, or at least not in the historical archive. As artists, these narrators were convinced that their mission was to tell the truth, to be honest, even crude at times. They broke away from what we would know

[352] Algeria's central role in the Pan-African Festival forced many of the participants to grapple with widely-circulated myths about Africa, particularly the arbitrary segmentation between North and South, and to construct a new definition of the continent. But some of the delegates at the Pan-African Festival of Algiers did not follow Algeria's lead; rather than ignore the language of racial solidarity, they directly embraced the idea of a racially divided Africa. While other Sub-Saharan countries present in Algiers were uncomfortable with Algeria's revolutionary rhetoric, Senegal more clearly expressed its discomfort with a Maghrebi country hosting or taking a lead in Pan-African cultural gatherings. Those who chose to challenge the North-South divide attributed the persistence of that divide to Léopold Sédar Senghor's philosophy of *négritude*. Many of the festival's participants were violently opposed to *négritude* informing continental collaboration. They argued that *négritude* was a reprise of near-universal racist perceptions used by white supremacists to argue for white supremacy from America to Spain, Russia, and England. They accused Senghor of continuing to uphold racist ideas, of playing into the hand of the European powers. For more see: Paraska Tolan-Szkilnik, "Flickering Fault Lines: The 1969 Pan-African Festival of Algiers and the Struggle for a Unified Africa" in *Monde(s)*, 2016/1, N° 9, pp. 167-184.

call the politically correct and, in the process, highlighted the tense and intimate nature of what actual, everyday encounters between people of the African Diaspora and those of the African continent looked like.[353] One topic, in particular, unleashed a host of racial slurs and stereotypes deeply embedded in these men's consciousness: sex. Talking about sex revealed notions of race that, in the name of Pan-African unity, many of my narrators were otherwise unwilling to talk about.

**The Algerian Perspective: Africanity nestled between Desire and Aversion**

*Algeria's Official Line: Between Black and White*

At eleven o'clock on the morning of July 21st, Houari Boumédiène launched the Pan-African Festival of Algiers with a fiery speech. "Colonialism also kills souls," he declaimed.[354] These souls can and must be recovered; Africans can only do so together, Boumédiène stressed, for "African unity, cultural African-ness, is a reality forged through historical events, on a common land, by men destined to the same future."[355] Making no distinctions between North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Boumédiène underscored the cultural unity of Africa and the shared destiny of all Africans. Throughout the symposium and Festival, the Algerian delegates, eager to participate fully in Pan-Africanism, chose

[353] I must note here that I never went into interviews seeking out stories of sexual encounters or relationships in the Maghreb. In fact, when these stories did come up in my interviews I frequently tried to steer away from them, and to get back to the original intent of the interview. But, as I continued to interview people, and as I read more of the literature produced in this specific period, I came to realize the importance of sex to how this Pan-African community was created and imagined itself. This is why I decided to dedicate a chapter to it. Because I was never seeking out these stories, I never questioned those who did not bring up sex or intimate relationships on these issues. Kathleen Cleaver, for example, who I interviewed in November 2015, never brought this up. This chapter is thus skewed towards talking about men's sexuality.

[354] Boumédiène, Houari, message in *La Culture Africaine*, (Algiers: SNED, 1969), p. 15.

[355] Ibid., p. 17.

to steer clear of racialized language, nervous perhaps about bringing attention to a racial question that could potentially exclude them.

While Algerian politicians avoided the language of racial solidarity, they attempted to reach out to the Black Americans present in Algiers for the festival. They believed that rather than a common racial identity, Black Americans and Algerians shared the more important bond of a common history of colonial oppression and revolutionary fervor. A July 23rd, 1969 article in the Algerian government-sponsored paper *El Moudjahid* reported the enthusiasm of the Algerian people, particularly the youth, at meeting the Black Panthers and discovering what they, the Algerians, had in common with Black Americans:

> The gallery was teeming with people, jostling to see the brilliant photo exhibition illustrating in all its forms the intense desire for freedom of the African-American people. From images of Black women demonstrating, or those of Huey Newton, Black Panther Minister of Defense, still imprisoned in an American jail cell to photos illustrating the daily lives of Black-Americans and of their leaders. [...] People were snatching thousands of copies of the 'Black Panther' journal and various other brochures illustrating the militancy of the youth, of women, of students in all African-American social classes.[356]

*El Moudjahid* noted the youth of the crowd in attendance at the Black Panther event. "The youth were entirely enthused by the Black Panthers' readiness to share," remarked the writers, "by their dynamism, and by the discovery of a revolutionary struggle of which the violence matches the relevance."[357] This excerpt from a government-sponsored paper reflects the Algerian government's desire to demonstrate that they were reaching

[356] "Inauguration du centre afro-américain : Freedom by the Festival (Liberté par le Festival)," *El Moudjahid*, Algiers, July 23rd 1969, p. 3.
[357] *Ibid.*

out to Black Americans and establishing a relationship based on a revolutionary ideal and a sense of shared oppression rather than a racial understanding of Africa.

Throughout the duration of the PANAF, Algeria's official line was that Algeria was unquestionably African. Government-newspapers such as *Algérie Actualité* and *El Moudjahid* sported titles such as "Algiers: Crossroads of African Culture," "We Discovered Africa," "Africa celebrates its reunion," and "The Festival is an enthusiastic and lucid assertion of our culture."[358] An op-ed in *El Moudjahid* mentioned Algiers' "intensely African nature," while an interview conducted by a *Moudjahid* reporter detailed the supposed delight of the Sub-Saharan delegations at their living conditions in Algiers.[359] The head of the Cameroonian delegation reportedly told the *Moudjahid* that "before this festival, most of our countrymen, who are peasants, would not have thought that a Black person could be the brother of a White person. This Festival will have showcased this fraternity for all to see."[360] According to the *Moudjahid*, the Festival even exceeded the Algerian government's hope of unity as illustrated by a man from the Ivory Coast talking to a taxi driver in Arabic.[361] The French Chargé d'Affaires in Algiers also noted with some condescension that while, at first, the Algerian people were "unused to the Africa of masques and sorcerers," little by little, they relaxed and by the last night the city was a scene of jubilation, with "the Blacks participating happily."[362]

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[358] "L'Algérie au carrefour de la culture Africaine," *Algérie Actualité*, July 27th-August 2nd 1969, p. 1; "On a découvert l'Afrique," *El Moudjahid*, July 22nd 1969, p. 4; Martine Perrin, "l'Afrique fête ses retrouvailles," ; "Le Festival est une entreprise lucide et enthousiaste de l'affirmation de notre personnalité," *El Moudjahid*, July 22nd 1969, p. 1, All newspaper clippings from the Matt Schaffer Collection, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, USA.
[359] Abdelmadjid M., "Lettre ouverte à l'Afrique retrouvée," *El Moudjahid*, July 22nd 1969, p. 2.
[360] Mustapha Ait Khaled, "Accueil et hébergement des artistes : un motif de satisfaction," *El Moudjahid,* July 30th 1969, p. 4.
[361] *Ibid.*
[362] Jacques Dupuy, Télégramme to Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Algiers August 3rd 1969, p. 2, Dossier Festival Pan-Africain, N_3_3_1, Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Nantes, France.

*El Moudjahid,* wanted to make one thing clear to its readers: Algeria's reunion with Black Africa was going very smoothly. Of course, the image that the Algerian government wanted to project may very well have differed significantly from Algerian officials' actual sentiments *vis-à-vis* Sub-Saharan governments and peoples.[363] In fact, the Algerian government did not always tout its Africanity, or its brotherly relationship with Sub-Saharan Africans. Whether they did depended on the audience. In 1964, in a conversation with Yugoslavian president, Tito, Ben Bella, intent on proving that Algeria had much in common with Yugoslavia admitted that yes, "Algeria wants to focus on Africa in its policies. Not because of skin color—we are white like you, maybe a little more brown—but because we have problems identical to problems of other nations on the continent and because our problems are intertwined."[364] Algerian officials eager to get support from whomever they could, used their country's racial ambiguity to claim belonging in turn to Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan African.

*A Parade of Bare Bosoms: Black Women at the PANAFEST*

In my interviews, and others conducted as part of the PANAFEST archive project, Algerian participants and officials underlined the fact that although Algerians may have been prejudiced towards Black Africans before the PANAF, during the PANAF they opened up and truly discovered their Africanity. In fact, many of the accounts of the Festival romanticize the event. "I think the PANAF was the only time that the word fraternity was palpable," reminisced Algerian writer Salah Guemriche in June 2018. "We

[363] Unfortunately, as I did not have access to government archives, all I can offer is this facade of entente, and statements acquired second hand.
[364] Byrne, *op.cit.,* p. 201.

were expecting… well you know there's always anti-Black racism amongst the Arabs, but there was none of all that. People were dazzled by Black Africa, by the dances, by the costumes."[365] "It was absolutely amazing, explosive," recollected Algerian artist Houari Niati in 2012, "People were embracing each other, there was total acceptance of what they were seeing. It was very pure, very untouched: raw Africa."[366] Even within these recollections of the Festival, however, we can still find snippets, and at times an abundance, of racial prejudice.

Algerian spectator, Boussa Ouadad, just 20 years old in 1969, first met members of the MPLA and FRELIMO liberation movements at the Algiers Technical School where they were training together. In a 2014 interview, Ouadad recalled his peers laughing when the liberation group members would show them pictures of their children back home. "Oh look he's [the baby] all naked," his peers would snicker, "they walk around all naked in their countries, see that's what Africa is like."[367] Ouadad recognized that his mother was scared of Black people. This was partly due to the Algerian War of Independence, and to the presence, in Algiers, of Black men who were conscripted in the French army. "These guys did terrible things, they would come in, break everything, terrorize women and children, just by their appearance even," remembered Ouadad.[368] But with the festival, Ouadad explained, everyone realized that these were not men to be afraid of, that they were brothers.

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[365] Salah Guemriche, interview with author, June 18th 2018, Angers, France.
[366] Houari Niati, cited in "Flashback: 21 July 1969. Pan African Cultural Festival Rocks Algiers," *Carinya Sharples Blog*, September 24th 2012, retrieved from: https://carinyasharplesjournalist.wordpress.com/2012/09/24/flashback-21-july-1969-pan-african-culture-Festival-rocks-algiers/.
[367] Boussad Ouadi, interview, *op.cit*.
[368] *Ibid.*

And yet, even as Ouadad described the festival as a moment of osmosis with Africa, he commented with amusement and titillation on the African women's clothing, or lack thereof. One of the most exciting moments of the festival, he disclosed, was the young women dancing in the streets:

> You should have seen these African troops, these natural and fresh troops, the girls were dancing, someone had put clothing on them, poor girls, and visibly they were not used to being dressed, so they would blow off the bras, and they would dance on the main square in front of the Grande Poste, and all the young people were there, and they had never seen that in their lives, young girls dancing like that bare chested on the square.[369]

Time and time again the Algerian men brought up, with a mix of excitement and condescension, these "poor girls" who had been forced to wear clothing. Black women only appeared in these evocations, none of the interviewees remembered talking with, or interacting with these women in any other way or occasion.[370]

Decades of scholarship on sex and sexualities have given us an intricate understanding of the political, social, and economic implications of sexual inequality. Particularly revealing are the works of Ann Stoler and Anne McClintock who have elucidated the ways in which sex and race intertwined to create complex systems of power and desire in the colonial contexts.[371] Very little has been written, however, on sex

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[369] *Ibid.*

[370] These comments are reminiscent of Ibn Battuta's descriptions of the Black women of Mali, who "appeared naked before people, exposing their genitals." [Ibn Battuta, in Tim Mackintosh-Smith (ed.), *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, (London: Picador, 2002), p. 290.] Ibn Battuta's manuscripts were widely circulated throughout Northern Africa, and likely contributed to the formation of stereotyped images of Black women's bodies for generations of Maghrebis.

[371] Such works include but are not limited to: K. Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1980); Sarah Hodges, *Contraception, colonialism and commerce: birth control in South India, 1920–1940* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Anne Mcclintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Anne Stoler, 'Educating Desire in Colonial South-East Asia: Foucault, Freud, and Imperial Sexualities', in L. Manderson and M. Jolly (eds), *Sites of Desire, Economics of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997); Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

between the colonized and the colonized. Studies of sex and of its power remain centered on the colonized-colonizer, or Black-White dichotomy.[372] Scholars such as Mohamed Omar Beshir have suggested that Arab stereotypes of Black sexuality were modelled after colonial perceptions of Black women as desirable and Black men as threatening.[373] However, this analysis ignores the lengthy relationship between North and Sub-Saharan Africa well before the arrival of the Europeans. Scholars of slavery in the Middle East and North Africa have pointed to the ways in which the Trans-Saharan slave trade forged an enduring racial-sexual hierarchy in which Black female slaves were seen as available and sexually adroit, while Black male slaves where depicted as a menace to Islamic patrilineage.[374]

As historian Chouki el Hamel demonstrates in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Morocco, Black women in the Maghreb were often considered particularly desirable. First, El Hamel explains, taking a Black slave as a concubine cost significantly less than marrying and didn't come with all the troublesome regulations about equal treatment. Second, he notes, Black women were believed to cure all sorts of ailments.[375] Historian Mohammed Ennaji also remarks that Moroccan men commonly believed that a Black

[372] Medievalists, such as David Nirenberg, offer one perspective of what sexual relationships look like in communities that have different levels of power, but are not in a colonizer/colonized hierarchy. See for instance: David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2014). /
[373] M. O. Beshir. *Terramedia : Themes in Afro-Arab Relations* (London, 1982) p. 45.
[374] Such works include: Rudolf Gaudio, "Trans-Saharan Trade: The Routes of 'African Sexuality,'" *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 55, No. 3, 2014, pp. 317-330; Chouki El Hamel, "'Race,' slavery and Islam in Maghribi Mediterranean thought: the question of the Haratin in Morocco," *Journal of North African Studies* , Vol. 7, No. 3, 2002; Chouki El Hamel, "Surviving Slavery: Sexuality and Female Agency in late 19th century and early 20th century Morocco," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2008; Eve Troutt-Powell and John Hunwick (eds.), *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
[375] El Hamel, "Surviving Slavery", *op.cit.,* p. 73.

woman's touch "cures the sufferer, satisfies lust, dispels ills due to cold and damp, and eases back and joint pain."[376]

In his 1978 novel *Moha le fou, Moha le sage*, [Moha the mad, Moha the wise] Moroccan writer and *Souffles* contributor, Tahar Ben Jelloun, tells the story of an Arab patriarch who takes a Black woman, Dada, as a slave. Through magic and sexual prowess ("Dada's erotic aptitudes made the patriarch crazy"), the woman manages to invert her and the patriarch's positions. Delirious with desire, the patriarch trills, "I am hers, she bought me on the market… I am her slave…" Though this story may have seemed transgressive in this reversal, in reality it contributed to an enduring tradition in the Maghreb of hyper-sexualizing the Black body, be it female or male.[377] Ben Jelloun, the militant-poet, was likely amongst those that watched the women dance bare-breasted in the streets of Algiers, for he also attended the PANAF, driving all the way from Morocco with other members of the *Souffles* groups.

*"They locked up all the prostitutes": Black men as sexual predators*

Black American and Sub-Saharan men who travelled to Algiers for the Festival were not immune from hyper-sexualization. Indeed, stereotypes about Black male sexuality were rife in Algiers. Theater director Bitty Moro from the Ivory Coast has retained mostly very negative memories of the Festival. First, he explained in a May 2014 interview, everyone treated the artists from the Ivory-Coast as neocolonialists, as

[376] Mohammed Ennaji, *Soldats, Domestiques et Concubines. L'esclavage au Maroc au XIXe siècle* (Casablanca : Editions Jacob Duvernet, 1994), p. 43.
[377] Jarrod Hayes, *Queer Nations: Marginal Sexualities in the Maghreb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 62.

capitalists.[378] The Ivory Coast, under Houphouet Boigny's rule, was no friend of the Algerians, and the theater troupe fell victim to the considerable political differences between the two regimes.[379] Second, Moro explained, in Algiers, he and his peers suffered, "Ah no, for them we are just *nègres*, in the pejorative sense of the word, that's who we are to them."[380]

Notably, Moro's stories of racism were always intertwined with questions of sex. In the restaurant where he and his troupe went for lunch, Moro recounted, the server, who had a wife and daughters, locked up his daughters. "Of course, I like joking," he related, "so I told him, hey we come to your restaurant to eat, and you have these beautiful daughters. Why do you lock them? They must come talk with us to know our bit of the world."[381] Another anecdote Moro reported took place in Tunis around the time of the Festival. Apparently, Moro had been walking in the streets of Tunis with Algerian writer Kateb Yacine's wife, when a group of young Tunisians came up to tell him that it was forbidden for a Black man to go out with a White woman. Finally, backed up against a wall, Moro had to call out to the police to get out of this tricky situation. The Maghrebi men in Moro's stories expressed deep anxieties about sex because sex is inherently part of the reproduction of racial categories. The idea of a Black man sleeping with one of their Maghrebi daughters, or more generally one of "their women," challenged their

[378] Bitty Moro, interview with PANAFEST archives, May 8th 2014, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/#PANAF_69-Bitty_Moro.
[379] Houphouët Boigny, the "Father" of the Ivory Coast's independence, was opposed to Pan-African unity, as proposed by Kwame Nkrumah. Boigny considered himself a moderate and opposed the revolutionary regimes of Algeria and the Guinea of Sekou Touré. A partisan of Francophonie, he maintained strong relationships with the French government and with French cultural and economic interests well after the Ivory Coast's independence. For more see : Pierre Nandjui, *Houphouët-Boigny: l'homme de la France en Afrique* (Paris : l'Harmattan, 1995).
[380] Bitty Moro, interview, *op. cit.*
[381] Bitty Moro, interview, *op. cit.*

continued identification as White Africans and their notions of racialized power; it threatened to muddle their racial understanding of themselves and of their country.

The Maghrebi fear of Black male sexuality can also be traced to the Trans-Saharan trade in Black slaves. Indeed, while Black women concubines still produced Arab children (under a legal system of patrilineage), Black men threatened Arab men's reproductive power. Many Black slaves in the Maghreb, and in the Mediterranean more generally, were castrated to avoid such problems. Those who weren't were kept far away from Arab women.[382] At the Pan-African Festival of Algiers, and in the 1960s more generally, some Black men, as we will see at the end of the chapter, took this as a challenge and seemed to use sex to defy fears of miscegenation and to break down racial categories.

It was not only individual Algerian men who hid the women in their family, recalled Moro. "You know, when I got to Algiers they had locked up all the prostitutes of the city," he mocked, "I don't know where they put them, but no *nègre* could go visit a prostitute in Algiers, ah because there were too many *nègres* in the city… until the end of the festival… ha! How can we cooperate with that?"[383] It is difficult to verify Moro's claim of such a decision on the part of the Algerian government without access to government archives. Many of my interviewees noted that the Algerian government had "cleaned up" the city for the PANAF, which could perhaps be a subtle allusion to the removal of sex workers from the streets of Algiers.[384] On the other hand, this anecdote

[382] Gaudio, "Trans-Saharan Trade: The Routes of 'African Sexuality,'" *op cit*, and Hunwick and Powell, *The African Diaspora*, *op.cit*.
[383] Bitty Morro, interview, *op. cit.*
[384] Tahar Ben Jelloun, "Entretien avec Sembène Ousmane," *Souffles,* 16-17, Rabat, (4th trimester 1969), p. 51.

suggests that Black African visitors sensed that the Algerian people and the Algerian state considered them a sexual threat, even to those at the bottom social ladder: sex workers. Historian David Nirenberg, in a discussion of restrictions around prostitution in the Middle Ages, queries "Why would a community invest its honor with women whom the community itself defined as without honor?"[385] In other words why would the Algerian government care what happened to such socially marginalized figures as sex workers?

In 14th-century Iberia, Nirenberg argues, prostitutes functioned symbolically as the skin and body that bound the Christian community together, "hence the danger of a miscegenation that could achieve, at least symbolically, the clandestine admittance of the non-Christian into the Christian community through the body of the prostitute."[386] Similarly, in "French regulations of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Algeria," Bruce Dunne argues that in pre-colonial Algeria, sex workers were seen as a public good—they functioned as a public service for adolescent sexual initiation in a society that was sexually segregated.[387] In the colonial period, European and "Indigenous" sex workers were separated and each serviced their own communities. Hence, perhaps, the desire to lock up female sex-workers during the duration of the PANAF was linked to fears that Black men would "contaminate" the Algerian youth through the body of sex workers. It was a form of social control over poor, single women, from an Algerian state that did not care what happened to these women *per se* but did care how these women's actions affected the sexual lives of adolescent Algerian men.

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[385] David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence, op.cit.*, p. 152.
[386] *Ibid.,* p. 156.
[387] Bruce Dunne, "French Regulations of prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Algeria," *The Arab Studies Journal*, Volume 2, Number 1, (Spring 1994), pp. 24-30.

**The Black American perspective: Africanity nestled between Surprise and Lust**

*The influence of Fanon and the Battle of Algiers*

In July 1969, René Depestre and Ted Joans joined Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver and hundreds of artist-militants from across the Black Atlantic in the streets of Algiers to celebrate the Pan-African Festival of Algiers (PANAF). For many of the Black Americans, this was their first trip to Africa, a continent whose struggles for independence mirrored, in their minds, the civil rights battles in the United-States.[388] Particularly powerful in the minds of many Black Americans was the plight of Algerians and the brutal war France had waged upon them. In fact, Black newspapers in the United States covered the conflict in Algeria in great detail.[389]

For the Black Americans, inspired by *The Battle of Algiers* and Frantz Fanon, coming to Algiers was a pilgrimage to the Mecca of Revolution. Both Fanon's text and Pontecorvo's film transformed ongoing debates on revolutionary tactics within Black American communities. Eldridge Cleaver hailed the publication of *The Wretched of the Earth* as a historic event—one that legitimized the use of violence. In his *Post-Prison*

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[388] This was certainly not the first time that Black Americans looked towards the international arena in order to find a solution for racial segregation and violence in the United States. In *Defying Dixie*, historian Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, explores a moment when Black and White southerners travelled to the USSR, during the interwar period, in order to find a radical and international class-based solution to end white supremacy. See: Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008). *Mississippi to Madrid* tells the story of a Black American man who traveled to Spain, during the Spanish Civil War, in a non-Jim Crow army to fight against fascism and imperialism alongside the Spanish. There he found an overwhelming sense of kinship. For more see: Yates, James*, Mississippi to Madrid: Memoir of a Black American in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* (Greensboro: Open Hand Publishing, LLC, 1989).

[389] Despite the strong parallels that many African-Americans drew between their conflicts in the United States and the struggles of Algerian revolutionaries, scholarly literature on Algeria's role as a revolutionary symbol is sparse. Samir Meghelli with his article "From Harlem to Algiers: Transnational Solidarities Between the African American Freedom Movement and Algeria (1962-1978)," [Meghelli, "From Harlem to Algiers," *op.cit.*] and Solail Daulatzai with his *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America,* are two of the rare scholars that look to the influence of Algeria on the African-American imagination. [Solail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond American* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012)]

*Writings and Speeches*, first published in 1979, Cleaver claimed that *The Wretched of the Earth* "is now known among the militants of the black liberation movement in America as 'the Bible.'"[390] According to historian William L. Van Deburg, by the late 1960s the image of Fanon had reached far beyond the mere elites of the movement and by the end of the 1970s *The Wretched of the Earth* had sold some 750,000 copies in the United States. "Every brother on a rooftop can quote Fanon," claimed Dan Watts, editor of *Liberator* magazine.[391]

The movie *The Battle of Algiers* had an equally important impact on radical Black American communities and only served to increase their fascination with Algeria. In the late 1960s, Francee Convington, a student in political science, wrote an essay published in the anthology *The Black Woman* and entitled "Are the Revolutionary Techniques Employed in *The Battle of Algiers* applicable to Harlem?" In her essay, Convington claimed, "If *The Wretched of the Earth* is the 'handbook for the Black Revolution,' *The Battle of Algiers* is its movie counterpart."[392] Michele Russell, a young Black American woman who traveled to Algiers for the Festival on a group trip with some fifteen other young Black Americans, described her fascination with Algiers, before her feet even touched Algerian soil. "Algeria: the whole world is impressed on this land," Russell wrote, "and we, at least temporarily, veer about, staking out our particular past's claim to what we see."[393] Russell 'knew' Algeria. Like so many of her contemporaries, she claimed: "we had seen the film 'Battle of Algiers' in the States. Now wandering in the

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[390] Eldridge Cleaver, *Post-Prison Writings and Speeches* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 18.
[391] William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 60-1.
[392] Francee Covington, "Are the Revolutionary Techniques Employed in The Battle of Algiers Applicable to Harlem?" in *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, Bambara, Toni Cade, (ed.), (New York: Penguin, 1970), p. 244.
[393] Michele Russell, "Algiers Journal," *Freedomways*, Fourth Quarter, (Fall 1969), pp. 355-364, p. 357.

city, each street came upon us with the shock of a double exposure. Neon signs became the flames of bombed cafes. Women in veils became saboteurs. Taxi drivers, the incarnation of dedicated cadres careening around corners to unknown rendezvous."[394] *The Battle of Algiers* had such an influence on the minds of many young Black Americans that when they actually travelled to Algeria, their experience was mediated through the movie; walking around Algiers of 1969 they attempted to recover the Casbah of 1958, eager to fit its actual inhabitants to the revolutionaries they had so admired from afar.

Algeria's predicament, and more generally the plight of all North Africans, were thus widely discussed amongst radical Black Americans. Violent images of the Algerian War had crossed the Atlantic and many African Americans moved Algeria to the forefront of their vision of Africa; the conflict in Algeria became a quintessentially African battle and the most relatable African struggle. Thus, in July 1969, Black Americans travelled *en masse* to Algiers, eager to see the set of the *Battle of Algiers* in real life. When Black American saxophonist, Archie Shepp, first touched down on Algerian ground, he supposedly kissed the dirt. He couldn't help it. "I didn't get the sense that I was in the Maghreb, but that I was in Africa. [...] It was truly Pan-African," he admitted in a 2014 interview.[395] In 1969, however, Shepp didn't even use the word "Maghreb." In an interview following his star performance in the streets of Algiers, Archie Shepp declared to the Algerian government newspaper *El Moudjahid*: "I am happy to be here in Algeria: it is a return to Africa after 500 years of estrangement." In

[394] *Ibid.,* p. 360.
[395] Archie Shepp, interview with PANAFEST archives, May 14th 2013, Ivry-sur-Seine, France, http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/#PANAF_69-Archie_Shepp.

2014 Shepp felt that the distinction needed to be made between Africa and the Maghreb. In 1969, however, Shepp made no such distinction, either because he did not think it politically salient or simply because he was not aware that such a distinction even existed.

Despite the influence of Fanon and of *The Battle of Algiers*, according to many accounts, some Black Americans had no idea that the Maghreb was not exclusively populated by Black Africans. French cinematographer Theo Robichet, who apparently rode next to Eldridge Cleaver on the plane from Paris to Algiers, remembered that Eldridge refused to get off the plane when they had arrived in Algiers. "We are not moving," Eldridge supposedly told Robichet, "We are not in Algiers, look outside everybody is white. Algeria is Africa, this is not Africa." In the end, Robichet claimed, they had to go get Kathleen to convince Eldridge to get out.[396]

When, in a 2018 interview, I asked Elaine Mokhtefi, the Cleavers' guide and translator in Algiers, if she thought the Black Panthers and the other Black Americans who were in Algiers for the Festival had experienced any racism, she responded: "I don't think they ever felt discriminated against, it's not like today. [Algerians] saw Black people all the time. When I worked at the presidency there were a couple token Black Algerians. Everyone was aware of the problem of racism, but I think they handled it pretty well."[397] Mokhtefi, a white American woman, was probably not best suited to speak on the experience of racism in North Africa. While many White and Algerian spectators believed that there was no racism at the PANAF, a few people exhibited a

[396] Theo Robichet, interview with PANAFEST archives, March 25th 2014, Gennevilliers, France, http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/#PANAF_69-Th%C3%A9o_Robichet.
[397] Elaine Mokhtefi, interview with author, September 3rd 2018, New York City, New York, United States.

better sense of observation. One French bystander, who by July 1969 had been living in Algiers for some time, remembers that the children in the street would scream "nègre, nègre, nègre" when they saw a Black person walk by. He also remembered hearing a Black American man, accompanied by his wife and kids, crying over his shattered illusions, repeating "Africa also is white."[398]

*"They are long gone/We are glad they are gone"[399]: Black Americans wrestling with the racial realities of the postcolonial Maghreb*

Accompanying Archie Shepp on stage on the night of July 28th 1969, Ted Joans declaimed: "We are still black and we have come back. *Nous sommes revenus.* We have come back and brought back to our land, Africa, the music of Africa. Jazz is Black Power! [...] From Harlem, from Watts, from Detroit, from Chicago, from Alabama, from Kentucky, from California, we have returned!"[400] Like Shepp, Joans made no distinction between Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. To him it was all Black Africa, his homeland. An outspoken poet and prose writer, Ted Joans was not reluctant to talk about race. And yet, in North Africa, Joans often willfully ignored racial differences and tensions, convinced that in the free countries of Africa racism was already history. Using crude and often sexual language and writing on every surface he could find including plane tickets and hotel brochures, Joans' prolific work reveals some of the visceral feelings that American poets and musicians felt when thinking of Africa, North Africa, and of Blackness.

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[398] Gilles Gauthier, *Entre Deux Rives*, *op.cit*., p. 37.
[399] Ted Joans "The pieds noirs," *Afrodisia*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), p. 33.
[400] Transcribed from Klein, William, *Festival Panafricain d'Alger*, (Office National du Commerce et de l'Industrie Cinématographique, 1970), and Archie Shepp, *Live at the Panafrican Festival* (BYG-Actuel 529351, 1969). Both are available on youtube.

Archie Shepp (right) and Ted Joans (left) on the Place de la Grande Poste on Monday July 28th 1969 at the Pan-African Festival of Algiers, Algeria.

Photo by Guy Le Querrec

Source: Magnum Photos

Very few scholars have tackled Ted Joans' complex figure. Excluded from most of the major literary anthologies of the second half of the twentieth century, when Joans *is* included, in works on the Beat generation, he is the lone Black face in a sea of White faces.[401] This is not for lack of an archive. His papers, housed in the Bancroft Library at the University of California Berkeley, consist of 20 linear feet of collages, correspondence, prose, poetry, film scripts, travel logs, pamphlets, posters, and much more. Perhaps Joans suffers a similar fate to the Maghreb he so loved, the bane of occupying an interstitial space between Europe, the United States, and the African continent. As writer Gerald Nicosia noted:

> the best way to read Joans may well be with an almanac and an English, French, Spanish and African American (slang) dictionaries at your side, as he continually forces you to look up obscure place names and words like Tuareg, okapi and pangolin, to understand jive-talk, and even to translate whole passages from another language.[402]

[401] Gerald Nicosia, "Preface," *Teducation Selected Poems* (1949-1999), (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1999), p. Iv. For a discussion on Ted Joans' exclusion from the African American Literary Canon see: Robert Elliot Fox, "Ted Joans and the (B)reach of the African American Literary Canon," *MELUS*, Volume 29, Number 3-4, (Autumn - Winter, 2004), pp. 41-58.
[402] Nicosia, "Preface," *op.cit*, p. Iv.

Nicosia distinguished three influences in Joans' work. Joans work, in many ways, embodied the Black Atlantic. Africa, Europe, and the United States, each place allowed him to play a distinct role: "the universal man of color, in touch with the basic needs and emotions of primitive humanity; the expatriate, honing his intellectual edge against European sophistication; and the American black, son of slaves and prisoner of racism, forever cast upon his own resources of wit, guile, and creativity to forge his own freedom."[403] Many scholars have been content to point out the ubiquity of Africa in Joans' work, without parsing the many Africas in his oeuvre or showcasing how much his work embodies the crossings of the Black Atlantic. Joans' lengthy sojourns and travels throughout the African continent meant that Africa took on a physical, as well as utopic, form for the American poet, often that of a woman.

Ted Joans was born on July 4th 1928 in Cairo, Illinois. The child of a riverboat entertainer killed during the 1943 race riot in Detroit, Joans' exposure to both the power of music and the depths of U.S. racism came early. After receiving a BA in Fine Arts from Indiana University, Joans moved to Greenwich Village. He continued to paint and write, and in doing so joined the boisterous Beat World that was the Village in the 1950s.[404] He threw lively parties, socialized with Alan Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Amiri Baraka, and integrated the Jazz scene in Harlem, where he met Charlie Parker.[405] In 1961, fleeing the violence and racism of the United-States, Joans chose exile. He did

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[403] *Ibid.,* p. iii.
[404] For more biographical elements see: Ted Joans, "Poet Painter/Former Villager Now/ World Traveler," Wendy Tronrud and Ammiel Alcalay (eds.), *Lost and Found*, Series 6, Number 4, (Spring 2016), Parts I and II; William T. Lawlor (ed.), *Beat Culture: Icons, Lifestyles, and Impact* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2005).
[405] To see an example of an invitation to Ted Joans birthday party in Greenwich village see: Gloria and Fred Mcdarrah, *Beat Generation: Glory Days in Greenwich Village* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), p. 94. Ted Joans is credited with scrawling the phrase "Bird Lives" around Greenwich village when Charles Parker died in 1955.

not, however, opt to leave the United States for Europe, such as his mentors and friends Chester Himes, Richard Wright, or James Baldwin. Ted Joans merely passed through Paris on his way to Africa. He developed a love-hate relationship with the French capital. In Paris he met the surrealist poet André Breton, one of the major inspirers of his work henceforth, as well as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and many more. Like Mario de Andrade, Marcelino dos Santos, and others before him, it was being in Paris and meeting Africans that convinced Joans that it was time to get out of Europe and actually start exploring the continent he had so longed for. And so, Joans travelled to Morocco, where he confronted the reality of the African continent with the images of the "motherland" he had nursed for years.

Joans began writing about Africa before ever travelling to the continent. His pre-1960 poems are replete with idealization and stereotypical imagery. In a poem written in the mid-1950s, entitled "Going Home," Joans described the African continent as a place of jungles and antelopes, never mind that antelopes don't typically live in jungles.[406] In one of his first poems from Africa, from Morocco, in 1960, Joans wrote: "Africa is the land where Rhinos roam."[407] Africa and Blackness were always intertwined in his vocabulary. Africa was a concept, a dream rather than a real place.

But beneath that veneer of wild reverie, the reality of travelling was not always pleasant for Joans. In 1961, onboard the ship Lyautey, on his way to France, Joans and his travelling companion complained about the number of Muslims on the ship, "more than a thousand," and of the "filth" that they brought to the cabins; "they spit and pee

[406] Ted Joans, "Going Home," BANC MSS 99/244, Box 1: 10, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[407] Ted Joans "Africa," BANC MSS 99/244, Box 1: 36, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

everywhere." When the captain agreed to change their living quarters, Joans wrote "it is good to be away from those Moslems. They are not clean people."[408] Some of those "Moslems" that Joans met in a French ship in the 1960s were most certainly North Africans. Joans' racial awareness when it came to the issue of racism in the United States evidently did not extend abroad, at least not at first. When travelling, Joans was a man of the First World. Black American travelers to Africa were often baffled by the hard reality of life in Africa, by the smells, the poverty, and the difficult travelling conditions.

Nevertheless, Joans settled in between Tangiers and Timbuktu, crossing the desert regularly, writing and painting, even exhibiting his work at the Librairie des Colonnes in Tangiers.[409] As the landscape of his life transformed, the linguistic topography in Joans' poetry also changed: little by little, jungles were replaced by deserts, antelopes by camels, and references to Berbers and Tuaregs became regular. Joans fell in love with Morocco. He signed his name in long lines reminiscent of Arabic script and started to integrate words of Arabic in his writing, much like Mario de Andrade and Marcelino dos Santos had when they were living in Morocco. Poems like his unpublished March 1965 "Twin Sounds" offered a window into the multilingual and multicultural milieu Joans inhabited. In a smoky surrealist reverie, Joans talked of sex, of Lautreamont, and of race, weaving together French, English, and Arabic.[410]

It was in Morocco that Joans learned of Malcolm X's assassination. After reading the news in a French-Moroccan newspaper, Joans wrote:

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[408] Ted Joans "Onboard the Lyautey," BANC MSS 99/244, Box 17: 23, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[409] "Ted Joans expose à la Librairie des Colonnes," *Journal de Tanger*, Samedi 19 Janvier 1963, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 3:71, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[410] Ted Joans "Twin Sounds," March 24th 1965, ANC MSS 99/244, Box 2:2, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

> I raised my head toward the African sky so that I wouldn't cry
> I thought not of good food
> I thought not of good sex
> I thought not of great art
> I just stood with my head raised toward the East
> and in peace I thought of you and now I confess
> that you spoke for me and thus died for me
> Yes I confess
> I loved you Malcolm X.[411]

In many ways Joans trip to North Africa emulated Malcolm X's own *Hajj* to the Middle East and North Africa. When Malcolm X travelled to the Middle East in 1964, he visited the Moroccan and Algerian Casbahs and identified thoroughly with the struggles of the Maghrebi people. In the Middle East and North Africa, Malcolm X made one more surprising and delightful discovery. He wrote to his assistants in Harlem from Mecca that year:

> [Islam] is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered 'white'—but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam.[412]

According to Malcolm X, Islam erased race.[413] Joans, at times as equally unaware of, or unwilling to recognize, the racial dynamics at play in the Maghreb and in the African continent made a similar observation: "There is no racism in the independent countries of Africa, so leave your racist bag at home," Joans wrote in the introduction to his unpublished *Black Man's Guide to Africa*.[414] Like Malcolm X, Joans found Africa to

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[411] Ted Joans, written in Goulimine Morocco in February 1965, in BANC MSS 99/244, Box 2:1, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[412] Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), p. 347.
[413] This discourse on Islam as race-blind was not uncommon in the Black American community. See: Sherman Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Towards the Third Resurrection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[414] Ted Joans, *The Black Man's Guide to Africa*, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 12:14, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

be a place free from the shackles of American racism, a fact that he, like Malcolm, credited to Islam. Joans explained that the Arabs had brought Islam, the great unifier, to Africa, as well as "fine arts and handicrafts, the Arabic language (which unified the people), and a new way of life."[415] Despite his racist remarks towards "Moslems" onboard the Lyautey in 1961, it was in North Africa that Joans felt the most at home, and he seemed wholly unaware of the racial tensions between Arab and Black people.

Joans was not the only Black American to be unaware, or to choose to ignore, the racial dynamics within Africa. In a 2015 interview, Kathleen Cleaver also remembered a confusing anecdote from her first few days in Algiers:

> When I got there I thought I was in Africa, I thought this was North Africa, Africa, and I remember saying something to a store keeper, in some kind of broken French, I'm sure he thought I was crazy, about how we are in Africa, and you are African, and I'm African-American, "And he said Africa's over there." Africa's on the other side of the Sahara, in their mind. It was very interesting, I didn't understand that idea, they felt Mediterranean, all the people I was meeting were Berber. They did not think they were African. They thought Africans were Black people. They hadn't figured out how we could be White and African.[416]

Kathleen Cleaver had expected to feel welcome and at home in Algeria. Instead she was treated as a White woman, as a "first world woman" because of her light skin and style of dress. When Kathleen walked around the streets of Algiers with Eldridge, Algerian men congratulated Eldridge for securing a White woman. Unlike Joans, Kathleen Cleaver did not feel that race was erased in the Maghreb, instead she felt racially misidentified.

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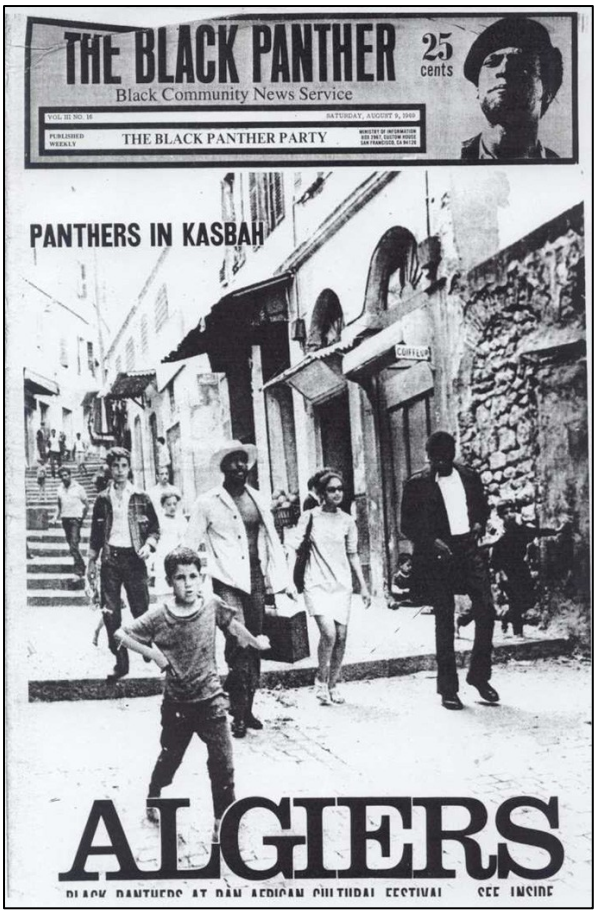
[415] Ted Joans, *The Black Man's Guide to Afric*a, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 12:14, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA. During his time in Africa Ted Joans set off to write *The Black Man's guide to Africa*. The guide is written in "Black English," a tongue which, according to Joans "has a rhythm that causes statements to swing loosely and of course un-academic [...] this language is a living force, a freedom thing." The guide is funny and informative a lot of the time. It is a revealing window into one Black American man's struggle to make sense of Africa and of its people.
[416] Kathleen Cleaver, interview with author, September 26th 2015, Atlanta, Georgia, United States.




The Panthers in the Algiers Kasbah.

*The Black Panther Journal*, Volume III, Number 16, August 9th 1969.

When Joans did stand out in the Maghreb, it seemed to be a more pleasant experience. His first time in Algeria, shortly after the revolution, a young man in Sétif called Joans "someone of the jazz music tribe," a comment Joans seemed to enjoy.[417] Clearly Joans also attracted attention in Algeria. He had no problem expressing his feeling of loneliness amongst a crowd of White Parisians in the Louvre Afrique "one walls and in glass cases only one Black/present amongst all these pale faces."[418] Yet, in Algiers, Joans did not often emphasize the color difference, did not articulate the difference in terms of Blackness or Whiteness. Never did he call North Africans White.

[417] Ted Joans, *The Black Man's Guide to Africa*, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 12:14, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[418] Ted Joans "Louvre Afrique," *Afrodisia*, op.cit., p. 57.

In Algeria, and in the Maghreb more generally, his Blackness seemed not as racial, or skin-tone related, as it was political. Joans noted, when he, the poet Don Lee and the editor Hoyt Fuller explored the city of Algiers during the PANAF, "the people were very friendly to us because we were Black Americans and NOT imperialists negro Americans."[419] Perhaps they were also friendly to him because they were Black Americans and not Black Africans, and because they were men, not women. Joans was given room to express his Africanness in political – rather than racial – terms, whereas Kathleen Cleaver was robbed of her Blackness, of her connection to Africa, and, thus, of her ability to influence the discourse of political or cultural Pan-Africanism.

During July 1969, in the frenzy of the PANAF, Joans wrote four poems. Two of those were about the idea of return, "back with my tribe again/I have returned/back home again/glad to be back/with my tribe black."[420] Another, described the visit he and the poet Don Lee paid to the Musée des Beaux Arts, a visit to see "where the black in us begin[s]."[421] To Joans, it seemed, Algeria was undeniably, unproblematically African, "Algeria is really an 'A' for Africa country," he wrote, and this was largely because its people had fought and won their independence from France. To Joans, Algeria was Black because it had struggled against colonialism; he associated Blackness with resistance. Like other members of the Maghreb Generation, Joans had discursively racialized resistance and welcomed a range of militants (White, Brown, and Black) into his Pan-African family.

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[419] Ted Joans, *The Black Man's Guide to Africa*, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 12:14, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[420] Ted Joans, "Home," BANC MSS 99/244, Box 4: 26, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[421] Ted Joans "We, Don and me," BANC MSS 99/244, Box 4: 27, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

Shortly after returning from Algiers in 1970, Joans published a collection of poems entitled *Afrodisia*. The book is divided in two, half of the poems are dedicated to Africa, the other half to Eros. In reality, both themes intertwine, as the title suggests. Joans wrote several of the poems included in this collection during the PANAF, and many more referenced the PANAF, or alluded to encounters Joans made in Algiers. In a 1975 interview with Skip Gates, Joans referred to this collection of poems as his "hand-grenade poems: poems you pulled the pin out of, threw and BOOM that was it."[422] *Afrodisia* contains a poem entitled "The Pieds Noirs," in reference to the French-Algerians that left Algeria after the country's independence. The poem demonstrates Joans' identification with Algerians. "They are gone," he applauded, "they have sunk into/ the earth or gone back/ to their European cemeteries/ they are gone long gone/ we are glad that they are gone."[423] Using the "we" to encompass both him and the Algerians, Joans demonstrated his easy and enthusiastic identification with the Algerian people, through their communal resistance to colonialism.

Nowhere in his writings on North Africa does Joans note discomfort with being a Black man in a multi-racial, African world. If anything, what bothered Joans more, such as in the excerpt onboard the Lyautey, was being a man of the First World living in the Third World. No matter how open-minded Joans claimed to be, or wanted to be, living in North Africa was difficult at times; he wrote of the smells and sounds of the medina with a certain touch of imperialist-like repugnance—he expressed a sensory overload that ranged from immense pleasure to visceral disgust. During the PANAF Don Lee remarked to Joans, as they rode in a crowded slow bus along the northern part of the desert, "I

[422] Ted Joans, in "Ted Joans: Tri-Continental Poet," *Transition*, No. 48, (1975), pp. 4-12, p. 8.
[423] Ted Joans "The pieds noirs," *Afrodisia*, *op.cit.,* p. 33.

never knew how spoiled the Man had made us, until I ran into this natural scene, right here that I'm in, it's really tough and rough on the mind. Damn, just think, I was brought up in the Chi slums too, but this is really something!"[424] What baffled Black Americans like Joans and Lee most was not that Algerians were not the Black Africans they had imagined, but that Africa was tough and poor. It was the material, rather than racial, reality of coming to a Festival in a recently decolonized and underdeveloped area that made them feel that they didn't quite belong.

While Joans was mostly bothered by the smells and lack of infrastructure, Kathleen Cleaver never got over the initial cultural shock of Algiers. Like Joans, she spent significant time in the city, but unlike Joans, she was in forced exile. Algeria, and the Maghreb more generally, was no place of poetic inspiration for Kathleen Cleaver. Instead it was a place of banishment from which to continue the fight in the United States, and this was not always easy. On top of the frequent racial or racist remarks regarding her supposed Whiteness and Eldridge's Blackness they received when walking around Algiers, they also faced numerous material problems. They were unable to make friends; their Algerian neighbors refused to speak to them, as the Black Americans were under police surveillance. They couldn't read the news or understand what was happening on television. Everything, from daily life to political organizing, was an ordeal:

> We didn't know anything about how you negotiate with Third World governments. Which is not a direct way, you essentially work things out bit by bit, and it depends on who you know and what they say. And Algeria in particular was a very, very opaque society. So you really never know who is who, or what anybody knows, you just operate with a very limited amount of information, everybody, not just us, it's about the whole

[424] Ted Joans, *The Black Man's Guide to Africa,* BANC MSS 99/244, Box 12:14, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

> culture, but particularly for people from America who aren't particularly French or Arabic and had never been in Algeria and weren't planning on going to Algeria.[425]

Joans remembered his time in Algiers fondly. Kathleen Cleaver did not. This was no doubt due to their difference in gender—being a woman excluded Kathleen Cleaver from much of the enjoyment and fun of Algiers during the PANAF. Furthermore, though Algerian society would have been opaque for all of them, Eldridge Cleaver and Ted Joans would have had significantly more freedom of movement than Kathleen. Both Joans and Eldridge Cleaver were invited to speak at the PANAF; the crowd at both events was loud and enthusiastic. During the PANAF, Kathleen Cleaver, however, was giving birth. She was not invited to voice her opinion in the debates; very few women were. In Algiers, she was sidelined by the unfamiliar culture and the denial of her racial and political identity. As Kathleen noted, the culture of secrecy in Algeria suited Eldridge, he was a secretive man, and the secrets were usually shared with him. But for Kathleen this meant that most of the time she had no idea what was going on.[426] And while Kathleen was unable to make any Algerian friends, men or women, many of the men who came to the PANAF fondly remember meeting Algerian women.

*A collection of "Moorish Bosoms:" Black American Men and the Algerian Women*

"I don't remember much of those couple weeks in Algiers," confessed Haitian poet René Depestre in the dwindling light of an evening in December 2017 in Lézignan-Corbières, France. Giggling with a boyish timbre for a man of ninety years, Depestre

[425] Kathleen Cleaver, interview with author, September 26th 2015, Atlanta, Georgia.
[426] Kathleen Cleaver, interview with PANAFEST archives, June 2015, New York City, NY, United States, http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/#PANAF_69-Kathleen_Neal_Cleaver.

recounted what little he did recall: a sexual adventure involving two sisters in his Algerian hotel room. "It was the most unusual experience of my life," he continued, bringing the anecdote up multiple times over the course of our two-hour long interview.[427] René Depestre had been living in Castro's Cuba for several years, in exile from Papa Doc Duvalier's reign of terror. In 1969 he travelled to the PANAF in the hopes of meeting other young artists who were equally dedicated to freeing Pan-Africa from the chains of European colonialism.

Shortly after the PANAF, Ted Joans wrote a poem entitled "As Don took off at Dawn." The poem combined descriptions of travelling back from Algiers to Morocco with impressions from the Festival, "Miriam the queen is crowned queen/[...] Archie elephant steps the Joy/black Africa black at last/black African back to black/black power free at last/drums roar from mudhut centers/diplomats' naked chests shine black/protocol: a smile, a couch, a pow-pow/Pan-African frying white whales/pole puke rocketed to the moon."[428] In rich, confusing, and at times disturbing surrealist language, Joans divulged his vision of Pan-Africanism. The poem personified Joans' Pan-African dream as a woman, "Inchallah today or this morn/a pair of arms await her torso/she will be here to hear it/she will be here to taste it/she will be here to see it/she will be here to dance it/she will be here to smell it/the smell is stench of passion/stink of paradise on my shirt."[429]

Like Depestre, what Joans retained from the PANAF was lust—lust for women, lust for Africa, lust for union. Time and time again, the stories and dreams of the Maghreb Generation were shrouded in sexual language. The world of Pan-African and

[427] René Depestre, interview with author, December 13th 2017 in Lézignan-Corbières, France.
[428] Ted Joans, "As Don took off at Dawn," *Afrodisia*, *op.cit.,* p. 54.
[429] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

Third-Worldist politics was the domain of men—men who lusted after women.[430] Very few women actually took part in the debates over African unity, or in Symposiums such as the one organized by the Algerian government during the PANAF. Instead they appeared in writing as gatekeepers to their respective cultures—gates that men could open through sexual relations. These two anecdotes reveal that Depestre and Joans, much like many of the men who came to the PANAF, including some of the Black Panthers, related to the Algerian nation through its women, or rather through sex with its women. Sex and lust were embedded deep in the lexicon of the Revolution. For these men who found themselves in an unknown land and culture, sex with Algerian women represented the potential to reinvent oneself and experiment with different identities. Sex was, as historian Marc Matera argued, "an ongoing revision of self-presentation, borrowing from and mixing heterogeneous cultural elements and images" of the Pan-African or Third-Worldist revolutionary.[431] As Depestre explained to me, "through my sexual relations in Algiers and Morocco I discovered Arab poetry, Arab culture, the great sociologists of the past, like Avicenna, and others [...] making love was an act of civilization."[432] Depestre intellectualized his sexual desire, transforming it into a tool of anti-imperialism.

Both Depestre and Joans wrote extensively of their sexual travels. In his *Afrodisia* collection, Joans included a poem called "My Trip." Mingling erotic language with that of political liberation, Joans conflated his discovery of Africa with his sexual travails, as if the act of sex was revolutionary per se. In his characteristic surrealist imagery, Joans described his trek across Africa, alluding, subtly or not, to the many women he

[430] Even Jean Sénac, an open homosexual, tended to personify Algeria and Pan-Africanism as a woman.
[431] Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 223.
[432] René Depestre, interview with author, December 13th 2017 in Lézignan-Corbières, France.

encountered throughout. Through these women, Joans claimed to have become Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian. "I have been to the desert I have lived with the blue men, the Tuaregs/I have crossed the largest erg and reg in the world with no blues," he wrote, "That/was my trip/I have drank mint tea while sitting on my Harlemese/haunches after Saharan hospitality lunches I have hitchhiked with my/fly wide open and spurted hot sperm into wide pelvic Berber women [...] That is my trip I have Moroccod/Algeried/Tunised."[433] This is one of several poems Joans wrote in the 1960s that described Joans' sexual encounters with a Berber woman.[434] In the text, Joans' Berber companion has no name, personality or memorable characteristic other than her Berber-ness and her wide pelvis. It is unclear whether each encounter is even with the same woman. The Berber woman is a vessel, both physically and figuratively. Literally the woman is a vessel for Joans' sperm, a way for him to plant a little of himself in Africa. Figuratively she serves as a local flavor to his work, a vessel for the Berber-ness in his poetry. Despite Joans revolutionary ideals, the North African woman in his poetry is no more than an object to be conquered, a bit of Africa to reconquer from the white colonizers.

In a short story entitled "Memories of Géolibertinage," published in 1981, Depestre recounts a similar sexploration of the world—an exploration through sex. Drawing a map of the countries that he discovered through its women, Depestre explained that through sex the world's powers morphed; "I made a world deliciously horizontal where no one ever talked of cold war, of the iron curtain, of imperialism, of

[433] Ted Joans, "My Trip," *Afrodisia*, *op.cit.,* p. 64.
[434] Another such poem is "Black Caper," written in Marrakech in 1972, in BANC MSS 99/244, Box 6: 23, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

Atlantic pact, of nuclear explosions, of Ku Klux Klan, colonial expeditions, [...] swastikas, yellow stars, or of apartheid…"[435] With each woman from a different culture, Depestre had a chance to reinvent himself, they untethered him from his identity as a Black Caribbean. With them he could become "Baudelaire, Behanzin, and Leo Tolstoy, Al-Hossain-ben-Ali-ben-Sinan and Shango, [...] Abraham Lincoln, Alfred Nobel, Sibelius and Moctezuma, Li Tai-Pe and Beethoven."[436] These women gave Depestre the opportunity to transcend his Blackness, they gave him access to a new geography, they acted as guides to a new world. In his imagination, they were complete embodiments of their cultures, never militants of a new geography of their own. They were archetypes, avatars of their ethnic, racial, or national origin.[437] At the same time, he scrubbed them of any political power or baggage because in bed, these women were no longer able to talk of the Cold War, of apartheid, or of racial injustices. In *Imperial Leather*, historian Anne

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[435] René Depestre, "Mémoires du Géolibertinage," *Alléluia pour une femme-jardin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. 117.

[436] *Ibid.,* 116. French poet Charles Baudelaire; 11th King of Benin, Behanzin; Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy; Grandson of the Prophet Mohammed Al-Hossain-ben-Ali-ben-Sinan; Orisha Deity Shango; American President Abraham Lincoln; Swedish Chemist Alfred Nobel; Finish Composer Sibelius; Aztec Emperor Moctezuma; Chinese Poet Li Tai-Pe; German composer Ludwig Van Beethoven.

[437] In *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905*, Kenneth Ballhatchet reveals how the British Empire in India attempted to control sexual relations between British soldiers and Indian women. All children born of that union risked blurring the lines between "civilized" British and "barbaric Asian." [Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj, op.cit.*, p. 2. See also: Linda Bryder, "Sex, Race, and Colonialism: An Historiographical Review," *The International History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Dec., 1998), pp. 806-822.] In *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, Ann Stoler explains that interracial sex was the ultimate threat to the colonial system since racial mingling could provoke a collapse of the entire colonial system. Controlling the subalterns body had always been one of the most important jobs of the colonial administration. Stoler demonstrates that the French government in Indochina relied on the difference between "white" and "indigenous" to distinguish between citizen and subject. Who slept with whom was never left to chance for exclusion and inclusion in society demanded a regulation of the sexual, domestic, and romantic life of the citizens and the subjects. [Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge, op.cit.*; Ann Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," *American Ethnologis*t, Vol. 16, No. 4, November 1989, pp. 634-660.] Stoler bemoans the tendency, within colonial studies, to think of sexual domination as a metaphor for European social domination, sexual domination thus becoming merely a symbolic representation of colonialism and not a reality with human consequences. While Stoler reveals the colonial anxiety at sex between colonizer and colonized, but does not talk about sex between the colonized, or the formerly-colonized. In much of the work on sex during the colonial period, scholars focus exclusively on sex between colonizer and colonized.

McClintock discusses the "gendering of empire"—the process by which unconquered "virgin" land was feminized—"Women are the earth that is to be discovered, entered, named, inseminated and, above all, owned. Linked symbolically to the land, women are relegated to a realm beyond history and thus bear a particularly vexed relation to narratives of historical change and political effect."[438] Far from being colonizers, Joans and Depestre were radical anti-colonial visionaries. Yet, their political project remained sexist, ultimately mimicking colonial fantasies about African land, and relegating the women they encountered to the "realm beyond history" by erasing their individuality and thus depoliticizing them.

Depestre and Joans participated in a culture that sexualized Arab women. Influenced perhaps by their extensive sojourns in France, these men internalized the white French gaze towards the women of Algeria. In his 1986 *The Colonial Harem*, Algerian poet and literary critic Malek Alloula, problematized the French man's gaze towards the Algerian woman. In his essay on colonial postcards, Alloula followed the gaze of the colonial photographer as he tried to capture the Algerian woman, frustrated by her veil, mentally stripping her of her clothing, staging his own crimped fantasies, and creating, through his postcards, an anthology of "Moorish bosoms."[439] Alloula demonstrated that photographs of Algerian women represented the colonial regimes' "booty," the spoils of war, and the colonizer's fantasies of creating a bordello on the conquered land. They represented victory through masculine conquest.

Joans' revealed a similar obsession with the veil and the possibility of lifting it: "Moroccan girls/are often covered/ in kaftans/shawls/djellabahs/some wear small hankie

[438] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather, op.cit.*, p. 31.
[439] Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

veils/Moroccan girls/utilize flirty eyes/a welcome and/a double dare stare."[440] Depestre also showed a Western-like fascination with Arab women. "The Arab woman is very sensual because you see Islam is a very erotic religion," he explained to me in December 2017, "despite its macho attitude [...] and, you see, the Arab woman makes love like a fairy."[441] Like many European men, Depestre disapproved of what he perceived as chauvinism in Muslim culture and thought the Arab woman should be liberated from the oppression of chastity.

In his 2015 book entitled *Black London*, Marc Matera explores the tensions at play in the London-based Black community of the 1920s and 1930s. By looking at the journals of many of the young Black intellectuals who lived in London (including South African novelist Peter Abrahams, and Trinidadian Historian CLR James), and analyzing the way these men talked about their sexual relationships, particularly with White women, Matera concludes that sexuality was "central to the reconstitution of gendered selves in opposition to empire, and Black masculinity was the presumptive staging ground of anticolonial political subjectivity."[442] In the Pan-African network of the 1960s and 1970s, masculinity was a similar staging ground of anti-imperial or anti-neocolonial political subjectivity. Of course, Britain and the Maghreb were disparate contexts in which to act out this hyper-sexualized masculinity, and the stakes were fundamentally different. But the unabashed and unapologetic hyper-sexualization that both Joans and Depestre deployed was similarly central to their ideology—an ideology of revolutionary

[440] Ted Joans, "Pretty Far-A-Way," BANC MSS 99/244, Box 7:30, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[441] René Depestre, interview with author, December 13th 2017 in Lézignan-Corbières, France.
[442] Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century,* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 236.

"tenderness" or "love."[443] Like the narrators in Matera's story, Depestre, Joans and many of their fellow male poets were on a quest for male independence, freed of the puritanical chains of Western domination.[444] But unlike the narrators in Matera's story who were concerned primarily with the White woman (either as a way to take revenge on the White colonizer, as a tool of advancement in Londonian society, or as a still forbidden fantasy), Joans and Depestre did not limit their sexual desires to White women. On the contrary, the diversity of geographies that the women in Joans and Depestre's stories are bound to, indicate a desire to transcend the Black/White, colonized/colonizer binary. Perhaps this is why they thought their conquests were revolutionary. Through their sexual adventures they defied White and Maghrebi fears of miscegenation, and created a world that they believed to be more equal.

While the men in Matera's narratives may have sought financial or political assistance from the white London women, they clearly stated the personal and sexual nature of these relationships. Joans and Depestre's sexual accounts, however, are suffused with the language of public service. They fashioned themselves as selfless agents of African freedom—through their erotic poetry they hoped to free the "Cuntinent," a term that Joans joyously coined, from what he called "the weak men with turtlenecked sweaters."[445] But in the "selfless" act of liberating, they conquered too. Joans ends his poem the "Cuntinent" with "body cuntinent I have claimed you/body cuntinent I have conquered you all/body cuntinent you are mine." Relegated to the realm

[443] The two men were participating in a global trope of revolutionary love, and a very prevalent one in the 1960s. Che Guevara famously said: "Let me say, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love." Ernesto Che Guevara "El Socialismo y el hombre en Cuba", March 12th, 1965.
[444] *Ibid.*
[445] Ted Joans, "Cuntinent," *Afrodisia*, *op.cit.,* p. 72.

of body and land mass, women had little room to articulate a different vision of African freedom or of their own Africanness. Freedom was still premised upon gendered notions of power, conquest, and on the ability to claim a little bit of Africa through sex.

**Conclusion: On Sex and Pan-Africanism**

The Maghreb Generation's poetry both teetered between two seemingly opposite currents of emotion: rage and love. Rage they expressed through what Joans called "hand-grenade poems," manifesto poems, advocating violence and calling for the union of the damned of the Earth. Love they expressed through their endless fantasies and descriptions of women. They used sex, lust, and, at times love, to understand Africa. Through the language of "tenderness" and "love," they wrestled Africa out of the hands of Western sexual imperialism and made it their own. At the same time, they reproduced European colonial tropes of luscious, highly sexual Africa, undermining their own anti-colonial liberatory projects of racial and cultural solidarity. Conflating oppression with repression, sexual liberation with structural liberation, personal liberation with political liberation, these men sought to free the African woman, and in particular, the Algerian woman, through sex. They were at once victims and vehicles of the very colonialism they sought so hard to topple. On the other hand, through these acts of love and lust with Arab women, they thwarted the long-standing barrier Maghrebi society had erected between the Black man and the elite Arab woman.

Much of the literature on Pan-African and Third-Worldist politics focuses on the incredible alliances forged across oceans and continents, between people who did not speak the same language, but who, through their desire to build something other than a

capitalist globalized world, managed to connect. But the world of Pan-Africanism and Third-Worldist politics was not deprived of cultural tensions and miscommunications, as evidenced by the experiences of Joans, Moro, Depestre, and the Cleavers. The variety of cultures, the gap in incomes and ability to travel, the change of racial perceptions, and the barriers of gender and sex were but a few of the hurdles between members of Maghreb Generation. The men who travelled to Algeria in the summer of 1969 had to parse through layers of myth about Africa, and about Algeria's place on the continent and in the world. Men like Joans and Depestre believed that they had managed to overcome these hurdles, that they had "Arabized" or "Algerianized," not realizing how this created hierarchical power dynamics between them and the Algerians (particularly the Algerian women) who were bound to a static Algeria, doomed to remain simple embodiments of the narrative of the erotic Arab woman or the revolutionary Casbah dweller. Algerian participants and the Algerian government fell victim to a similar, overly-simplified imaginary, arguing that, if only for that month in the summer of 1969, they had overcome the long shadow that Trans-Saharan slavery cast over the Black Atlantic. In the end, however, the Black men and women who attended the PANAF felt similarly pigeon-holed by Algeria stereotypes. The fantasies that surrounded Black bodies, Arab bodies, and female bodies of all racial backgrounds, which had developed over centuries of slave trade and colonialism, were too deeply embedded to evaporate in the heat of a July in Algiers.

# Part III. Tunisia, the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage, and Habib Bourguiba's Soft Pan-Africanism

## Chapter 5. The Red in Red-Carpet Regalia: The Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage and Tunisia's Soft Pan-Africanism

*"L'Europe est une périphérie de l'Afrique. Voyez, ils sont restés plus de cent ans chez moi ils n'ont pas parlé ma langue, je parle leur langue [...] si vous prenez la carte de l'Afrique géographiquement vous pouvez mettre l'Europe et l'Amérique il vous resterait encore de la place [...] ce tropisme pourquoi voulez-vous que je sois comme le tournesol qui tourne autour du soleil je suis moi-même le soleil."*[446]

*"Europe is a periphery of Africa. See, they stayed at my place for over a hundred years and they don't speak the language, I speak their language [...] if you take the map of Africa and you put Europe and America in it, you still have room. This tropism… why would you want me to be the sunflower turning towards the sun? I am the sun!"*

- Ousmane Sembène, 1983

### Introduction

The story goes something like this: Tunisian film critic Tahar Cheriaa travelled to the Cannes Film Festival in May 1966. There, for the first time like many of the other attendees, he discovered African cinema through Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène's first feature film: *La Noire de…*, a film about the dehumanizing effects of racism upon a young Senegalese woman. The young woman is employed by a French couple and treated so horribly that she considers suicide as the only option to regain liberty.[447] Upon seeing Sembène's film, it dawned on Cheriaa that cinema was a powerful tool that could illustrate the African experience for the masses. Cheriaa invited Sembène to participate in the inaugural Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage (JCC) in October 1966. Sembène received the festival's first prize, the Tanit d'Or, that October, and inspired scores of young African filmmakers to create their own films. So goes the tale of the first encounter between Tahar Cheriaa and Ousmane Sembène and the

[446] Férid Boughedir, *Caméra D'Afrique,* 1983, Tunisia, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnzYbeeEhAo.
[447] Ousmane Sembène, *La noire de…* 1966, (Dakar : Filmi Domirev, 1966), available on Amazon.

subsequent creation of the JCC. In the decades since, both men have been lionized in films and documentaries such as Mohammed Challouf's film *Tahar Cheriaa: A l'Ombre du Baobab* and Samba Gadjigo's *Sembène!*[448] The story of Cheriaa and Sembène's friendship is a central component of African film's founding myth. Not only did the poster for the JCC's 26th session feature both men's content faces, proudly puffing away at their pipes, but many of my interviewees refer to this creation story to illustrate Tunisia's special relationship with Black Africa and it's particular claim to Pan-African, Third-World leadership, and Black Atlantic leadership.[449] As Boughedir claimed in a 2018 interview, "Tunisia remains the most Pan-African of the Maghrebi countries, when it comes to film, and to culture in general."[450]


Poster for the 26th Edition of the JCC.

2015

In 1966, the Tunisian Cultural Ministry created the JCC as a way to compete with Algeria and Morocco on the African cultural scene. The JCC's beginnings were weak and

[448] Mohammed Challouf, *Tahar Cheriaa: À l'Ombre du Baobab* (Tunis : Caravanes Productions, 2014) ; Samba Gadjigo, *Sembène !* (Dakar : Galle Ceddo Projects, 2015), available on Kanopy.
[449] 26th edition of the JCC, poster, November 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[450] Férid Boughedir, interview with author, June 12th 2018, Paris, France.

geared towards European approval. However, under the joint leadership of Tahar Cheriaa and Ousmane Sembène, the biennale gradually emerged as a Pan-African forum for debates on the role of the postcolonial state, and the relationship between artists and their people. Through interviews with JCC participants and administrators, JCC pamphlets, press coverage, and personal correspondence, this last chapter reveals the lesser-known story of the JCC as the final home to the Maghreb Generation in the mid-1970s.

This chapter first explores Bourguiba's vision of Pan-Africanism, and why the idea of the JCC appealed to a Tunisian government seeking influence in Sub-Saharan Africa. The chapter then examines why members of the Maghreb Generation, such as Mario de Andrade, Med Hondo, Sarah Maldoror, and Ousmane Sembène, turned away from literature and poetry and towards film in their struggle for postcolonial freedom. By the end of the 1960s, as postcolonial governments across the Maghreb assumed tighter control of the printing press and media, the hopes for the role that poetry or fiction could play in liberation shriveled. A number of African writers turned instead to film, exchanging cameras and cameramen, and carrying reels halfway across the continent to show in cinémathèques or in town-squares. With film, they felt, they could more easily reach a largely illiterate public. Furthermore, as journals like *Souffles* and radio-shows like *Poésie sur tous les fronts*, were cancelled or banned, Ciné-clubs became some of the few spaces where political dissent still thrived. The third part of the chapter traces the JCC's evolution from its beginnings under the aegis of the Tunisian state, to its radicalization—the result of both internal political movements and the effect of radical militant-artists from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Diaspora. Eventually, the Tunisian

government, much like the Algerian government in 1969, appropriated the space, sanitized and monetized the Festival, and transformed it into red-carpet regalia.

## Tunisia's Forgotten Pan-Africanism

### *A Little Europe on African Shores*

Aside from the founding myth above, the JCC has garnered little attention in the scholarly world. Dwarfed by its Sub-Saharan counterpart the Festival Panafricain du Cinéma et de la Télévision de Ouagadougou (FESPACO), the JCC only appears in the footnotes of African cinema's founding texts.[451] Perhaps this is due to the fact that the Festival espoused the revolutionary Pan-African ideology emblematic of the Maghreb Generation, one that did not flatter Western film distribution companies, and in fact turned away from the West's push for technical and cultural cooperation.[452] The festival's organizers viewed companies, like the French Compagnie Africaine Cinématographique Industrielle et Commerciale (COMASIO) and the (also French) Society d'Exploitation Cinématographique Africaine (SECMA), as their primary enemies and attempted to

[451] Such texts include: Frank Ukadike Nwachukwu, *Black African Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Michael Martin ed., *Cinemas of the Black Diaspora: Diversity, Dependence, and Oppositionality* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press); Imruh Bakari and Mbye B. Cham Eds., *African Experiences of Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1996); John Downing Ed., *Film and Politics in the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1987); Dina Sherzer, *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Mantha Diawara, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). There is one dissertation that delves into the intricacies of the JCC: Sayda Bourguiba « Finalités culturelles et esthétiques d'un cinéma arabo-africain en devenir : les Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage (JCC), » (PhD Dissertation, École doctorale Arts plastiques, esthétique et sciences de l'art Paris, 2013). Morgan Couriou has also written a couple of excellent articles that explore the political tensions surrounding the JCC and the world of film in Tunisia: Morgan Corriou, « Les Journées cinématographiques de Carthage et la « guerre de libération cinématographique » (1966-1972) », *Africultures*, vol. 101-102, no. 1, (2015), pp. 294-317 and Morgan Corriou, "Cinéphilie et engagement estudiantin en Tunisie durant les années 1968," in *Étudiants Africains en Mouvement: Contribution à une histoire des Années 1968*, Eds. Françoise Blum, Pierre Guidi, Ophélie Rillon (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2017).

[452] It may also be linked to scholars' resistance to seeing the Maghreb as part of Africa.

nationalize their cinemas, create their own distribution networks, and affiliate with African institutions such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Western Distribution companies were enraged by these actions and deployed a series of attacks on independent African cinematic industries, managing, eventually, to force many countries to re-privatize their screens or to close their cinemas all together. In many ways that fight continues today. At the 29th edition of the JCC in November 2018, many African filmmakers and producers bemoaned the fact that their films were only shown in European festivals and cinemas; films produced for and by Africans had virtually no African audience.

To an even greater extent than Morocco, Tunisia's role in hosting liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly those invested in revolutionary culture, is still unknown. As Pierre Vermeren explained in "Misère de l'historiographie du 'Maghreb' postcolonial," historical scholarship on the Maghreb has mostly focused on Algeria—and even then, mostly on the Algerian War of Independence—and has left Tunisia virtually unstudied.[453] When scholars do refer to Tunisia it is often to use it as a counter-example to the anti-democratic tendencies of other Arab countries. Until the 2011 Tunisian Revolution, the Jasmine Revolution that ignited the Arab Spring, historian Jocelyne Dakhlia argued, the scant scholarship on Tunisia tended to portray the country as a "little Europe of the Enlightenment in gestation or in its infancy," somewhat insignificant, especially compared to its rowdy next-door neighbors.[454]

[453] Pierre Vermeren, « Misère de l'historiographie du 'Maghreb' postcolonial, » *Afrique Contemporaine*, vol. 245, no. 1, (2013), pp. 149-151.
[454] Jocelyne Dakhlia, *Tunisie: Le Pays Sans Bruit* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2011), p. 39.

Scholars have overwhelmingly portrayed Tunisia as a country turned North, towards the Mediterranean, and not as a country that sought to develop Pan-African or Third-Worldist solidarities.[455] Scholars and journalists have tended to characterize independent Tunisia's First president Habib Bourguiba as a modernist, a reformist, a man who cared about the subaltern, and women in particular, in short, a man who followed in Europe's steps. This is not to say that Europeans created this image out of thin air. [456] Bourguiba's government played an important role in exporting the image of a country on the cusp of modernity. Bourguiba's state doctrine, *Bourguibisme*, rested on the values of liberalism, state-controlled Islam, and autonomy from the Arab world. Particularly central to Bourguiba's doctrine was the idea of "politique des étapes," a step-by-step process to success. Bourguiba was not one to suddenly throw his country into any kind of rash pursuit. "I am a realist," he explained, "To be a realist is to prefer a modest reform to an impossible miracle."[457] Europeans and Americans were enthused by Bourguiba's doctrine of *Bourguibisme*. A June 1972 article published in *Le Monde* during

[455] Historian Charles Micaud introduced his 1964 *Tunisia: The Politics of Modernization* by lauding Tunisia for its painless adaptation to the modern world. Unlike most other new countries, Micaud argues, Tunisia "offers patterns of social development and a set of political institutions that, so far, seem to be meeting the task for modernization without sacrificing basic human values for totalitarian 'short cuts.'" This observation, coming from a French-American historian just eight years after Tunisian independence, demonstrates quite clearly the European desire to single out Tunisia as a model for African and Middle-Eastern development. Until now, much scholarship on post-independence Tunisia, such as Micaud's book, has participated in circulating the image of an exceptionally moderate country—one with a European mind-set and just a touch of Orientalist exoticism. [Charles Micaud, *Tunisia: The Politics of Modernization* (New York: Praeger, 1964)].

[456] A report entitled *La Politique Culturelle de la Tunisie*, destined to UNESCO, and written by Rafik Saïd, the director of cultural affairs in Tunisia in the 1960s and Ambassador of Tunisia to Canada, illustrates perfectly the rhetoric of the Tunisian government in the 1960s. Throughout the report, Saïd strives to show that Tunisia is the country with the richest culture in the world. Its strategic geographical position, he argues, gave Tunisia a modern and western culture with an authentic Tunisian touch. Tunisia, Saïd writes, "should attain a sublime level of civilization [... and] the people living in this pacific land, inheritors of so many different races, are they not one of the most cultured in the world?" [Rafik Saïd, *La Politique Culturelle de la Tunisie* (Paris : UNESCO, 1970)].

[457] Habib Bourguiba, cited in Mohamed Salah Kasmi, *Tunisie : L'Islam local face à l'Islam importé* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2014), p. 34.

Bourguiba's visit to France highlighted the French perspective on Bourguiba's state doctrine. "[French] Public opinion has recognized the command with which Bourguiba has directed the evolution of his country," the article read, "the wisdom of his positions in the great conflicts that divide the world. The capacity to ally patience and good-timing with audaciousness and decision-making, is the essence of 'Bourguibisme.'"[458]

As a result, historian Jocelyne Dakhlia argues, many scholars have turned a blind eye to the repression endured by Tunisians who dissented from Bourguiba's vision. A 1964 article in the *Monde,* spoke of Bourguiba as a strong man with a clear idea of Tunisia's future who, while he did not tolerate criticism very well, was "not made of the same wood as real dictators."[459] As late as 2006, the famous French political scientist, Béatrice Hibou, would not use the word "dictatorship" to designate Tunisia. While the government could be coercive at times, she wrote, "most Tunisians just adapt, and find concrete and material advantages to these rules."[460] Throughout his tenure, Bourguiba drew heavily on the language of Tunisian exceptionalism, and on Europe's idealization of Tunisia, to place a "chape de plomb" [leaden shroud] on all forms of opposition in the country.

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[458] "L'humanisme de Bourguiba," *Le Monde*, June 26th 1972, http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1972/06/26/temoignage-l-humanisme-de-m-bourguiba_2390957_1819218.html#pQgPvjHEv0oLmQ79.99.
[459] Sirius, "Unité et Diversité," *Le Monde*, April 27th 1964, http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1963/04/27/unite-et-diversite_2206197_1819218.html#QlojTwO1MjSeOR5G.99
[460] Maya Lenoir, interview with Béatrice Hibou, "La Tunisie sous la loupe de Béatrice Hibou," *Nawaat*, September 9th 2006, http://nawaat.org/portail/2006/09/09/la-tunisie-sous-la-loupe-de-beatrice-hibou/.

*Bourguiba's Soft Pan-Africanism*

Despite what the European *Zeitgeist* wanted to believe, however, the Tunisian government did not entirely disavow Pan-African ties. In the context of the Cold War, Tunisia, as a recently independent country, had to show nominal signs of non-alignment. And so, in search for moderate non-alignment partnership, Bourguiba first turned East and, when that failed, turned South to Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the first few years of Tunisian independence, Bourguiba did not seem to show much interest in Sub-Saharan Africa, or in highlighting Tunisia's Africanity. In 1963, at the first Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Addis Ababa—the very same summit where Ben Bella had made a passionate plea to support the Angolan independence struggle—Bourguiba showed some reticence at the idea of rushing into African unity. "We barely know each other," explained Bourguiba, "and we haven't had the time to figure out what brings us together and what divides us. We must erase all the walls built by the colonial period. We must not forget that Africa was for a long time a continent open to the world but closed to itself."[461] Bourguiba felt more connected to the Middle East than to Sub-Saharan Africa, a position which he made clear at the second conference of the OAU when he insisted that there could be no Pan-African solidarity if African leaders did not stand with the Palestinian people.[462]

Bourguiba travelled to the Middle East in 1965, where he delivered an infamous speech in Jericho on March 3rd. The address hinted at the fact that Arab countries needed

[461] Habib Bourguiba, « Unité dans la Diversité », Speech at the Conference of Independent African States, May 23rd 1963, Addis Ababa, published in *Bourguiba-Discours*, BNF, 1963, p. 12-13.
[462] Chaker Lajili, *Bourguiba-Senghor, Deux Géants de l'Afrique* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2008), p. 147 ; Mohsen Toumi « La Politique Africaine de la Tunisie », in *Le Maghreb et L'Afrique Subsaharienne* (Paris : CNRS, 1980), p. 120.

to work with Israel towards a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem. His appeal provoked an uproar across the Arab world, spurring demonstrations, and forcing Bourguiba to cancel a trip to Iraq. As a result, Bourguiba was vilified by a number of Arab leaders and their people. [463] Disappointed by the reaction of the Arab leaders and people, Bourguiba turned his attention South and decided to deploy *Bourguibisme* and Tunisian soft-power upon the African continent instead.

On November 15th, 1965, just six months after his Jericho debacle, the Tunisian president set off on a month-long trip across West Africa, which took him to Mauritania, Liberia, Senegal, Mali, the Ivory-Coast, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, and Niger.[464] Throughout this trip he promoted "Bourguibisme" as the only way to unite the countries of Africa. Positioning himself as the reasonable Tunisian patriarch, Bourguiba deliberately differentiated himself from Algeria's revolutionary rhetoric. In a speech delivered to the Senegalese Parliament, he called for a "commonwealth à la française."[465]

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[463] Marisa Fois and Filippo Petrucci, "Attitudes towards Israel in Tunisian political debate: from Bourguiba to the New Constitution*," The Journal of North African Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 3, (2016), pp. 392-410.
[464] Scholarly accounts differ in their interpretation of Bourguiba's feelings about Black Africa. In their biography of Bourguiba, the historian Sophie Bessis and the journalist Souhayr Belhassen, imply that Bourguiba had little admiration for the cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa, throughout his trip he simply followed the program, "acted like a tourist, in Cameroon demanded to be shown Pygmies, and asked all of his hosts to gift him wild beasts for the Tunis zoo." [Sophie Bessis and Souhayr Blehassen, *Bourguiba* (Tunis: Elyzad, 2012), p. 312]. Scholar Mohsen Toumi however, argued that Bourguiba was turning towards Africa, after his infamous speech in Jericho in March 1965 in order to find a new and compensating field for Tunisia to deploy its power. [Mohsen Toumi, "La Politique Africaine de la Tunisie," *op.cit.,* p. 120.] In any case, Bourguiba's special rapport with Black Africa came up again and again in interviews, particularly his relationship with Senghor, which newspapers of the time, and many interviewees remember now, was particularly intimate.
[465] Francophonie designates the ensemble of people, organizations, and institutions who use French. Francophonie is also often used as a shorthand to designate the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie, created in 1970 with the backing of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Habib Bourguiba, Hamani Dior of Niger, and Norodom Sihanook of Cambodia. La Francophonie's goal is to encourage cultural and technological cooperation amongst francophone countries throughout the world. Though the organization signed its charter in 1970, the seeds of the project were planted during Bourguiba's visit to Senegal in 1965. For more on Francophonie see: Georg Glasze, "The Discursive Constitution of a World-Spanning Region and the Role of Empty Signifiers: The Case of Francophonia," *Geopolitics*, Volume 12, Issue 4, (Winter 2007), pp. 656-679; Matthias Middell, "Francophonia as a World Region?" *European Review of History*, 10:2, (2003), pp. 203-220; Gabrielle Parker, « Francophonie et universalité: évolution de deux

This was Bourguiba's kind of Pan-Africanism, a rhetorical union premised upon developing cultural exchange that posed little to no political threat to his regime.[466]

When, in 1966, Tunisian film critic Tahar Cheriaa and Tunisian Minister of Culture Chedli Klibi came to the Bourguiba and asked to create the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage under the umbrella of the Tunisian Cultural Ministry, Bourguiba gave the project his blessing. To the Tunisian president, the JCC probably resembled other Trans-Saharan cultural exchanges that he had set up while in West Africa, such as the Tunisian Art Institute in Dakar—there was clearly nothing to worry about. By subsidizing festivals like the JCC, Bourguiba assumed, Tunisia could compete with Algeria's Pan-African draw, all the while attracting artists over militants and filmmakers over rabble-rousers. Little did he know what the Festival would become.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, African filmmakers benefited from some state-support, especially in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. However, according to Tunisian director Abdellatif Ben Amar, politicians did not necessarily bolster cinema for cultural reasons, but because they saw it as a way of "restoring the image of independence leaders, of the war of independence, of this and that, of showcasing the courage of our leaders who had participated in the liberation struggles."[467] And so, in the hopes of creating blockbusters glorifying Tunisian and Algerian independence, Maghrebi politicians started investing in building cinemas, circulating cinema mini-buses, funding festivals, and nationalizing the Maghrebi screens. Of course, explained Ben Amar,

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idées jumelles*, »* in Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel (eds.), *Culture postcoloniale 1961–2006. Traces et mémoires coloniales en France* (Paris: Autrement 2005) pp. 228–242.

[466] "Bourguiba aux Sénégalais : j'ai l'impression de m'adresser à des Tunisiens," *La Presse,* Tunis, November 27th 1965, p. 6.

[467] Abdellatif Ben Amar, interview with author, May 30th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

Maghrebi filmmakers were not interested in lingering on the past, on the events of independence, "it's as if French filmmakers had only made films about de Gaulle on June 18th, the African filmmaker lived in the present, he was interested in the question of women, in denouncing the abuse of power, and so this did not make the state happy."[468]

What Maghrebi filmmakers did have in common with the Maghrebi states was their interest in Pan-Africanism, explained Ben Amar. Pan-Africanism came naturally to Maghrebi filmmakers, argued Tahar Cheriaa; Maghrebi films were very similar to Francophone Black African films, in content and in form, "the influence of French culture, academic and cinephile, is often quite dominant." [469] Like the writers of *Souffles* had argued in the mid-1960s, the Tunisian filmmakers felt they shared much more with their Sub-Saharan counterparts than with those of the Levant: the experience of colonialism directed their subject-matter and their artistic priorities, drove them to much more political, sober, and rigorous films.

While intellectual networks that surpassed the nation-state posed a threat to the new African states, many of the themes dear to Pan-Africanism converged with the preoccupations and ideologies of the Maghrebi nation-states, and therefore did not seem threatening, at least not at first. To Bourguiba, the JCC and its Pan-African ideology would respect the popular and Manichean divide between Africans on the one hand, and Europeans on the other. As Tunisian Producer Hassan Daldoul explained, "Pan-Africanism is not nationalism, it's just culture. There is no ethnicity in Pan-Africanism, unlike Pan-Arabism."[470] So while Pan-Arabism may have seemed hazardous to

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[468] *Ibid.*
[469] Tahar Cheriaa "Les Cinémas Maghrébins : Presentation, » Kaiser Cheriaa, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[470] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

Bourguiba's regime, and risked unsettling Tunisian nationalism, Pan-Africanism, an ideology that hinged primarily on culture, did not seem to rest on strong enough foundations to pose much of a threat. To many Maghrebi directors, however, pursuing Pan-African networks became a relatively safe way of expressing resistance, and of evading the nation-state.

**The Maghreb Generation's Turn from Literature to Film**

If the 1960s was the decade of liberation, the 1970s was the decade of disillusion; a decade during which newly independent countries failed to provide for their inhabitants and sunk into chaos or into dictatorships.[471] The domain of the political was slowly closing to all but a few men. But not all in Africa gave up on political projects: much like they had in the previous decade, the realm of culture – the cinemas and cultural clubs, the literary reviews and cultural festivals – served as space to dream and construct a different vision of society. However, since assassination of Jean Sénac in 1973 and the imprisonment of the *Souffles* writers and editors, the viability of literary culture as a revolutionary weapon was swiftly dying out in North Africa.

[471] Recently scholars of the 1970s globally have attempted to defy the narrative of the 1970s as the era of decline. Titles such as the edited collection *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, point to the many ways in which the 1970s were a "transformative" decade. Indeed, they were. And though, as Alan Taylor argues in his contribution to the volume, they may have been a hopeful decade for the United States which managed to spread its message of globalization and neoliberalism throughout the world, for many countries in Africa the 1970s were synonymous with increasing economic and political dependence on International monetary institutions and Western companies. *[*Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent, eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010*)].* As Stephen Ellis explains in an article entitled "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa," the 1970s should be seen as a major rupture point in African history, even more so that the decade of independence. *"*If one seeks to identify points of discontinuity in Africa's history since independence or, to be more precise, in the history of Africa's insertion in the world," writes Ellis, "it becomes apparent that many ruptures first became visible in the 1970s, when oil crises, currency instability and a series of related events and trends combined to create a comprehensive change in the prospects for African states and societies, and in the forms of their political life." [Stephen Ellis, "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa," *Journal of African History*, 43 (2002), pp. 1–26.]

Nevertheless, the Maghreb Generation's cultural revolt against imperialism and neocolonialism was revitalized when people like Mario de Andrade, Sarah Maldoror, and Med Hondo turned towards film as the newest weapon in their arsenal. Filming in a grainy black and white, with borrowed cameras, filmmakers managed, to some extent, to create a cinematic culture in countries with no film industries. In some cases, filmmakers received support from national leaders eager to restore their image or glorify their independence struggle. More often than not, however, despite the lack of money, and infrastructure, young African filmmakers made do with what they had at hand and, in the process, created cult classics. Poet and *Souffles* contributor André Laude, who collaborated with Med Hondo, recalled that he and Hondo would buy film by the foot, "friends would steal film from the companies they worked at, we had an old busted camera. Wobbly. […] we would find old excerpts of documentaries and just glue them on to the film."[472]

In the early 1960s, when Senegalese writer Ousmane Sembène returned to Africa after ten years spent working as a dock worker in Marseille, he started to think of film as a more effective tool to reach his people, since many were illiterate. This acclaimed writer, an ardent supporter of leftist economic movements such as the Senegalese Railroad Workers' Strike, travelled to Moscow in 1961 to study film at the Moscow Film Society and train as a filmmaker of the people. When he returned, he made his first short film, *Borom Sareet.* The film was largely hailed as a landmark work in the history of African cinema, some scholars even arguing that African film was born in Senegal in

[472] André Laude, *Joyeuse Apocalypse* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 1973), p. 144-5.

1962 with *Borom Sareet*.[473] Many African artists soon followed in Sembène's footsteps, and turned to film. Angolan poet-militant Mario de Andrade started to assist his wife, Sarah Maldoror, in producing movies about the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. Mauritanian actor Med Hondo turned away from theater in 1968, because, he claimed, theater was too ephemeral, whereas film "was an art that left its traces,"— an art that had larger political implications and potential audiences.[474]

Like their poet peers, African filmmakers realized that Western encroachment was ongoing despite territorial liberation. Perhaps more than any other artists, filmmakers felt the weight of American and European cultural imperialism. Filming a full-length motion picture necessitated more expensive technology, more people, and generally more infrastructure than producing a radio show or a poetry magazine. What little money African filmmakers had access to was sparingly distributed by European agencies such as the French Centre National de la Cinématographie (CNC)—a system which allowed these agencies to control the themes and messages of the films emerging from the African continent. Furthermore, European and American distribution agencies retained significant control over what African cinemas projected on their screens. This, claimed Mauritanian director Med Hondo, was an effective way of penetrating the minds of African people, "influencing their everyday social behavior, directing them, and diverting them from their

[473] See Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*, *op. cit.,* and Frank Ukadike*, Black African Cinema*, *op.cit*. In "Francophone West African Cinema, 1955-1969: False starts and new beginnings," David Murphy explains that it is no coincidence that neo-realism became the go-to style of many filmmakers of the 1960s and 70s, it's DIY style allowed filmmakers who had little money to film their socially committed films. The Neorealism style focused on the difficult conditions of the working-class, they were filmed on location, frequently using non-professional actors. [in *Africa's Lost Classics: New Histories of African Cinema* (London: Legenda, 2014), p. 54].
[474] Med Hondo, in Ibrahima Signaté, *Med Hondo: un Cinéaste Rebelle* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1994).

historic national responsibilities."[475] Hondo argued that, through film such as Hollywood Westerns, the European and American governments were insidiously imposing alien models and references upon Africans, which ultimately damaged African cultural development. Not only that, Hondo continued, but this blocked

> true communication between Africans and Arabs, brothers and friends who have been historically united for thousands of years. This alienation disseminated through the image is all the more dangerous for being insidious, uncontroversial, "accepted," seemingly inoffensive and neutral. It needs no armed forces and no permanent program of education by those seeking to maintain the division of the African and Arab peoples—their weakness, submission, servitude, their ignorance of each other and of their own industry. They forget their positive heritage, united through their foremothers with all humanity.[476]

For Hondo and his peers of the Maghreb Generation, Africans needed to reclaim their own cinemas. If they could resume control of the screen, they could project a positive image of Africa, rooted in African concerns and for an African audience. Hondo and Sembène were weary of performing for a European audience, of being forced to take a back seat [strapontin], or simply serving as a hint of exotic flavor in European film festivals.[477] To be an African filmmaker, Hondo and Sembène believed, was to be a revolutionary, to cease filming postcard documentaries for European tourists, to revolt against the idea of "art for art's sake," and to break the confinement of "technical cooperation" with Europe (a finely veiled and polite form of neo-colonialism).[478] Like the poets and writer of the Maghreb Generation, the filmmakers of the Maghreb Generation

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[475] Med Hondo, "What is cinema for us?" 1979, Mauritania, in *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, Scott Mackenzie ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), pp. 300-303, p. 302.
[476] *Ibid.*
[477] Hondo, in Signaté, *op.cit*., p. 28.
[478] Ousmane Sembène, Témoignage in "1er Festival International des Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage," *Nawadi*, Organe de la Fédération Tunisienne des Ciné Clubs, Published in Septembre 1968, Archives Nationales de Tunisie, Tunis, Tunisia.

rejected the Western interlocutor or ally and viewed art and revolutionary politics as inseparable.

Sembène was careful to pinpoint the difference between a European rebel—the discontented youth who knew not what to do with their time—and the African revolutionary – a youth that was working towards a very specific goal: that of serving the African masses.[479] Hondo and Sembène were deeply influenced by the "Third Cinema" movement coming out of Latin America. Like their peers in Latin America, they struggled to forge a new path between the commercial films of Hollywood and the auteur cinema of Europe. Cinema should not be commercial or represent the view of a single individual instead, they argued, it should give voice to the struggles of the people and inspire them to revolutionary action.[480] As Tunisian director Nouri Bouzid remembered, in the 1960s, he and his peers waged a war on Hollywood and on Egyptian cinema, which had shaped the Arabic cinema market with its melodramas. They also waged a war on aesthetics, "we sometimes went so far as to reject plot and anecdote, considering that it was too easy to tell a story."[481] Like the writers of *Souffles*, the Luso-Africans, Jean Sénac, Ted Joans, and René Depestre, the filmmakers rejected art for art's sake, and

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[479] Témoignage de Ousmane Sembène, in "Quatre Africains à Cannes" Table ronde organisée par Jean-Claude Morellet, correspondant de *Jeune Afrique*, in Tahar Cheriaa' Journal de Cannes, Hassan Dalldoul, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.

[480] Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *Black African Cinema*, *op.cit.* For more on the "Third Cinema," see the founding text: Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, "Towards a Third Cinema," *Tricontinental*, Number 14, October 1969, pp. 107-132. https://ufsinfronteradotcom.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/tercer-cine-getino-solonas-19691.pdf. Fernando Solanas was himself inspired by Frantz Fanon's texts. In an interview during the PANAF in Algiers, Solanas explained that his goal in film was primarily to put in practice Frantz Fanon's revolutionary ideals: "our work is indexed on a continuous fight for liberation, and our thinking is always to follow the masses and to fight against all intellectual hierarchy, which is clearly a reflection of a so-called universal culture." Solanas argued that Fanon was just as important in Argentina as he had been in Algeria and Cuba. ["Interview de Fernando E. Solanas," El Moudjahid, August 1st 1969, 3AA.94, Quai Branly Archives, Paris, France.]

[481] Nouri Bouzid, "On inspiration," in Imruh Bakari and Mbye B. Cham (eds.), *African Experience of Cinema*, *op.cit.*, p. 49.

argued that beauty should be searched for in the heat of battle and in the cries of the people.

## Tracing the JCC's Historical Evolution

*The first years of the JCC: a government project led by Tahar Cheriaa*

Tahar Cheriaa, often called the "father of Tunisian and African cinema," was dedicated to the Pan-African cause—he thought of Tunisian culture similarly to that of Sub-Saharan Africa, explained Daldoul, a culture that had been squashed by colonialism.[482] A functionary of the state, an intellectual, a communist, a cinephile, a womanizer, a "Nietzschean with no mercy," Cheriaa assumed many faces, but seemingly all of them were Pan-African.[483]

Tahar Cheriaa was born in 1927 in Sayada, Tunisia. After spending ten years studying in France, he returned to Tunis in 1962 and was nominated Cinema Director at the Ministry of Culture and Information. Cheriaa, whose love of film started when he joined the Sfax Ciné-club in 1954, spent years studying the economy of film, writing reports for the Tunisian government and UNESCO, eventually concluding that whomever controlled distribution networks, controlled cinema.[484] In 1964, despairing at the lack of Tunisian films screened in Tunisian cinemas, and the overwhelming presence of Hollywood, Cheriaa attempted to pass a decree forcing theaters to show at least one Tunisian short film per trimester. Immediately, claimed Tunisian director Férid Boughedir, "Tunisia was placed upon a black list. For an entire year the whole country

[482] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[483] Kaiser Cheriaa, interview with author, June 7th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[484] Tahar Cheriaa, *Écrans d'abondance, ou cinéma de libération en Afrique* (Tunis: SATPEC, 1978).

was deprived of any new films. The American ambassador even personally asked Bourguiba who this Cheriaa, this Bolshevik, this communist was, he who was attempting to hinder the free circulation of American films."[485] It was in the aftermath of this terrible experience that Cheriaa decided to create the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage, under the auspices of the Tunisian government.

Amongst the Tunisian film directors and JCC participants I interviewed, Cheriaa is either considered a radical, who knew how to use government money to benefit his own projects, or a compliant member of the Tunisian state. In 1956, in an article entitled "Perspective d'actions cinématographiques en Tunisie," Cheriaa wrote that cinema was the ideal instrument of "interior and exterior propaganda," concluding that the cinema was thus "an essential element of the cultural and spiritual patrimony of the nation."[486] Perhaps Cheriaa was trying to convince the Tunisian government to invest into cinema production, arguing that this would be an ideal way to spread the message of *Bourguibisme*, and the hopes of Tunisian nationalism. Perhaps, he himself was a proponent of Bourguiba's regime. Historian Kmar Bendana claimed that Cheriaa was just a professor like others, that there were "50 possible Cheriaas, he was simply a functionary of the state."[487]

To Mohammed Challouf and Férid Bouguedir, however, Cheriaa was a revolutionary, a communist – although he was not a card-carrying member – someone who was looking for a revolutionary transformation of society.[488] To Boughedir, Cheriaa

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[485] Férid Boughedir, interview with author, June 12th 2018, Paris, France.
[486] Tahar Cheriaa, "Perspective d'action cinématographiques en Tunisie, » April 1956, p. 3, Hassen Daldoul, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[487] Conversation with Kmar Bendana, Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC), November 5th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[488] Férid Boughedir, interview with author, Paris, June 12th 2018; Férid Boughedir in Mohamed Challouf *A l'ombre du Baobab*, *op.cit.*

had succeeded in Frantz Fanon's dream of uniting the revolutionary Third World, by bringing together people like Ousmane Sembène and Egyptian director Tawfiq Saleh. To Boughedir Cheriaa was thus an essential link in the Maghreb Generation network. Cheriaa was no doubt conscious of the double personality he conveyed. At a UNESCO colloquium in the summer of 1970, on the theme of "the Artist-Creator's responsibilities in a violent society," Cheriaa reacted ironically, wondering "if this was a purposeful punishment given to this monster of contradiction, friend of the arts, defender of artists, supporter of freedom of expression, but nevertheless meticulous censor with the evil scissors, whose uncomfortable reputation I've acquired."[489]

In JCC-lore, Sembène and Cheriaa are often portrayed side by side. In interviews, Challouf and Kaiser Cheriaa (Cheriaa's eldest son) lauded the deep and enduring love the two men bore for each other. Kaiser Cheriaa recounted meeting Sembène's son a few years after Sembène and Cheriaa's respective deaths. "When I talked to him, it was crazy, I found the same behavior," he recalled, "Sembène had the same relationship with his children, it was like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, you know, who talked of social contract but then put his kids in an orphanage. It was the same thing, they were adored, they were Gods, but they were not fathers."[490] Though Kaiser had no fond memories of Cheriaa as a father, he remembered with admiration his dad's devotion to young filmmakers, whether they were Tunisian or from Sub-Saharan Africa, and his enduring friendship with Sembène whom Cheriaa described as a man like no other, Kaiser claimed.

[489] Tahar Cheriaa, "Les responsabilités de l'Artiste Créateur dans une société violente," in "Colloque sur l'impact de la violence dans les moyens d'information," UNESCO, Paris, 29 juin, 7-juillet 1970, p.1, Hassan Daldoul, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[490] Kaiser Cheriaa, interview with author, June 7th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

But the two men did not agree about everything: if Cheriaa was a functionary of the Tunisian government, Sembène was in an all-out battle with the Senegalese state, his films were often censored and he openly spoke out against the Senghor regime. Already in 1967, after Sembène claimed that African states were not ready to listen to African filmmakers and their problems, and that the struggle for freedom of speech was a top priority, Cheriaa tempered Sembène's rhetoric, claiming that freedom of speech was only secondary to reclaiming the means of production.[491]

No matter where Cheriaa's heart lay, with the help of the new Minister of Culture, Chedli Klibi, Cheriaa was able to create the first independent film festival on the African continent. In October 1966, the festival only exhibited one African film, *La Noire de…* by Ousmane Sembène. The other films were mostly from countries bordering the Mediterranean, most had already been screened in Europe, and, many festival participants felt that this first test-run did not distinguish itself sufficiently from other, European, festivals.[492] Many international observers and journalists seemed content with the festival, writing reviews that lauded Bourguiba's forward thinking; further evidence of the tendency of Europeans to view Tunisia with rose-colored glasses.

One Francophone Lebanese journalist, Mary Azoury, noted that she felt the "Tunisians had faith in the future. We've had the time to talk with many people; all trust their governors, they know these work for the general good. Many African countries wonder how to catch up. Tunisians do not ask such questions. Their country is sailing on

[491] Témoignage de Ousmane Sembène, in "Quatre Africains à Cannes" Table ronde organisée par Jean-Claude Morellet, correspondant de *Jeune Afrique*, in Tahar Cheriaa' Journal de Cannes, Hassan Daldoul, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[492] Morgan Corriou, « Les Journées cinématographiques de Carthage, » *op.cit.*

the wind of miracles, and the magician's name is Bourguiba."[493] French producer Christine Gouze Renal saw "extraordinary passion" amongst young Tunisian directors, "but," she warned "though your country is marvelous, and has so much drive, you have to leave behind your own problems [...]. You must enlarge your ideas, maybe talk about other peoples' problems."[494] Christine Gouze Renal's condescending tone aside, her comment revealed that she, like many of the festival's audience, had not understood the point of the festival to be Pan-African or Third-Worldist. Instead, she read this as one more attempt on the part of Africans to show that they were worthy men and women of culture. She was not wrong. In its first incarnation, the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage was "to show the West, where the film market is fiercely guarded against all foreign input, that talented filmmakers also exist in other places."[495] In other words, the JCC was still very much geared towards the West.

This did not last long, however, for Sembène, one of the JCC founders, and a fierce opponent of ideologies such as *négritude*, was busy lobbying for African filmmakers "to repudiate the West and to deal only with local problems, [...] the filmmaker must always take the side of the oppressed: Decolonization is not over."[496] Indeed, though the Tunisian regime, the Tunisian Minister of Culture, and the foreign press may not have understood the JCC as a Pan-African or militant space, on the ground, at the post-screening debates and symposiums, Maghrebi and Sub-Saharan film enthusiasts were coming together and comparing the problems they faced. "There were

[493] Mary Azoury, "Les Journées cinématrographiques de Carthage seront désormais une référence," *La Revue du Liban*, 9 novembre 1968, p. 13, Centre de Documentation Nationale, Tunis, Tunisia.
[494] *Jeune Afrique*, number 3/2, 1er janvier 1967, p. 58, Centre de Documentation Nationale, Tunis, Tunisia.
[495] *Ibid.*
[496] Ousmane Sembène, Interview with Hechmi Trabelsi, "Un état fort est celui qui accorde à ses artistes la liberté de critique," *l'Action*, 16th October 1968, Centre de Documentation Nationale, Tunis, Tunisia.

filmmakers from all over, from Senegal, Sudan, Somalia," remembered Daldoul, "that's when we started to realize, to debate, to think, and to build a Pan-African consciousness."[497] According to many of the people I interviewed, the movies themselves mattered less than the debates and discussions that occurred in the hallways, between movies, in the cafés, and in Tunisian apartments. It was in those spaces, outside of the purview of the Tunisian state, that the Maghreb Generation filmmakers met and started building the culture of dissent that would flourish at the JCC in the 1970s.

*1968: Radicalization from Within*

Though the JCC was created with the blessing of the Tunisian government, in reality, argued Tunisian producer Néjib Ayed, the Tunisian government didn't have the expertise to put in place a Festival of this scope. The Ministry of Culture thus placed it in the hands of the Fédération Tunisienne des Ciné-clubs (FTCC), one of the few spaces where resistance to Bourguiba's Tunisia thrived.[498] The FTCC, created in 1950, was one of the largest non-governmental organizations in Tunisia, it had over 100,000 members from across Tunisia, and it directed the cultural activities of Ciné-clubs throughout the country. In some towns the Ciné-clubs were one of the few places of socialization and entertainment for a new generation coming of age after independence. Organizing film projections, debates, and other cultural events, in locations across Tunisia, including in very remote areas, the leaders of the FTCC had their finger on the political pulse of the country. While the Tunisian government may have directed the cinema sector in theory, in reality, it was the FTCC that was in control of what happened on the ground. Similarly,

[497] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[498] Morgan Corriou, "Cinéphilie et engagement estudiantin, » *op.cit.*

while the JCC was funded by the Tunisian state, the actual organization, including the choice of films, the organization of the debates, and the allotment of prizes, was under the FTCC's supervision.[499]

Between 1966 and 1968, the FTCC changed the JCC's regulations. According to historian Morgan Corriou, many Tunisian and Sub-Saharan observers and participants had put pressure on the Festival's organizers to move away from the emphasis on the Mediterranean and Europe. Starting in 1968, the new regulations stated that only African and Arab films could be showcased in the official competition.[500] This decision likely stemmed from the changing environment in Tunisia. Tunisian students and film buffs were becoming increasingly tired of Bourguiba's single-party regime. They began to fight against this monopoly on the streets, in seminars, in Ciné-clubs, and, in the JCC.

The 1960s were marked by a strong student resistance to the Bourguiba regime. As early as 1963, two student groups were formed: one close to the Tunisian government and member of the UGET (Union Générale des Etudiants de Tunisie), the other more left wing, socialist, the so-called *Perspectives* group, who spoke out against Bourguiba's authoritarianism. Beginning in 1965, students started calling for strikes and demonstrations—which were violently repressed by the police. The members of *Perspectives* used similar rhetoric to groups like *Souffles*, and those who participated in the Off-PANAF; they were not fooled by the pseudo anti-imperialism of their governments and denounced these governments for being full of turncoats. One 1967 *Perspectives* pamphlet read: "Because the Tunisian leaders are part of this species, thankfully increasingly rare, of those who betray the oppressed and are in fact vassals of

[499] Néjib Ayed, interview with author, June 6th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[500] Morgan Corriou, « Les Journées cinématographiques de Carthage, » *op.cit.*

imperialism, we dedicate to them our utmost contempt."[501] In January 1968, when the US vice president Hubert Humphrey visited Tunis, Tunisian students flooded the streets to denounce US foreign policy – primarily the collusion between American imperialism and Zionism and the US War in Vietnam. On March 15th the students declared a general strike, which was once more violently repressed, and more than a hundred militants were imprisoned.[502]

In the world of Tunisian film, 1968 represented a changing of the guard, explained Morgan Corriou in her article "Cinéphilie et engagement étudiant dans la Tunisie de 1968."[503] It is no coincidence that many of the students who participated in the March 1968 protests were members of Tunisia's Ciné-clubs; the Ciné-clubs were spaces of politicization. In contrast to the early 1960s, where the network of Ciné-clubs across Tunisia was mainly dominated by suited Euro-educated or European members, by the late 1960s, a younger generation showed interest in film—a generation that had come of age after independence and was less concerned with the colonial past than they were with the societies they currently inhabited. High school and college students, laborers, and others began to use the Ciné-clubs as a space of socialization, and as one of the few arenas in which they could express themselves free from parental and state supervision. Much like Sub-Saharan filmmakers, this new generation was strongly influenced by the "Third Cinema" movement, and was thus much less concerned with art for art's sake, or

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[501] *Perspectives Tunisiennes,* Number 12, April 1967, cited in Burleigh Hendrickson, "Finding Tunisia in the Global 1960s," *Monde(s),* number 11, 2017, pp. 61-78.
[502] For more on March 1968 in Tunisia see Burleigh Hendrickson "March 1968: Practicing Transnational Activism from Tunis to Paris," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 44, No. 4, November 2012, pp. 755-774. Hendrickson argues, compellingly, that Tunisia figures very little in the history of 1968, despite the fact that the protests in Tunis occurred before the infamous French "May 1968." Even with the multiplication of studies on the global 1960s, Hendrickson explains, very few scholars have looked at student movements in the Third World, and even less so in Tunisia.
[503] Morgan Corriou, "Cinéphilie et engagement estudiantin, » *op.cit.*

for commercial benefits, and instead hoped to mobilize the masses through film.[504] Progressively they started taking control of the Ciné-clubs, every year gaining more elected seats in the Ciné-clubs' boards.[505]

If these students were unafraid to show their political colors at the Ciné-clubs, they were equally dauntless about exhibiting them at JCC events, under the very noses of Tunisian state officials. The French Ambassador to Tunisia, who attended the 1968 JCC and reported back to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noted that the Festival was a mix of "Bensalism, Marxism and Leftism," to Tahar Cheriaa and the Tunis University students' delight.[506] In fact, the JCC opened with a documentary on Ben Salah, Bourguiba's primary opponent, one that was applauded by the students in attendance.[507] "The student audience, hostile to the festival in principal (which they consider an anachronistic and bourgeois event) showed their hostility several times," wrote the French Ambassador, by "applauding when M. Ben Salah appeared on the screen, by violently criticizing the filmmakers and organizers around the morning debates, and by refusing the selection criteria of the films presented, amongst which they wanted to see *Soleil Ô* [by radical Mauritanian director Med Hondo]."[508] Clearly the Tunisian youth

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[504] For more on Third Cinema see footnote 479.
[505] Tahar Cheriaa, interviewed by Samira Dami, cited in "En passant par les écoles et les lycées," Kaiser Cheriaa, Personal archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[506] Letter from George Gaucher, Ambassador of France in Tunisia, to The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunis, November 6th 1970, p.7, Nantes Diplomatic archives, Nantes, France.
[507] Ahmed Ben Salah, a socialist who did not hesitate to criticize the emerging Tunisian bourgeoisie, was appointed Minister of Finance and Planning by a Bourguiba whose could sense the enthusiasm for socialism in the Tunisian population. However, when, by the end of the 1960s Ben Salah's ten-year plan to collectivize the Tunisian agricultural sector had failed, Bourguiba put Ben Salah on trial. Ben Salaha was ostracized by the Tunisian regime. He fled Tunisia and received asylum in Algeria. For more see : Célina Braun, « A quoi servent les partis tunisiens ? » *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 111-112, (2006), pp. 15-62 ; Noura Borsali, *Livre d'entretiens avec Ahmed ben Salah : l'homme fort de la Tunisie des annexes soixante* (Tunis : Noura Borsali, 2008). Andre Astrow, « Interview with Ahmed Ben Salah, » *Africa report,* Vol.33, Number 3, (1988), p.56.
[508] Letter from George Gaucher, Ambassador of France in Tunisia, to The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunis, November 6th 1970, p. 7, Nantes Diplomatic archives, Nantes, France.

was not interested in Bourguiba's vision of soft pan-Africanism. Instead, they sided with the militancy of films such as Hondo's *Soleil Ô*, a film that vividly denounced neocolonialism in its opening animated skit.

So as to compete with the Ciné-clubs radicalizing influence, Bourguiba's party, the Neo-Destour, created their own network of Ciné-clubs.[509] This did not help de-radicalize the students who continued to protest. "We wanted the liberty to think, to create, to critique, to talk about women's rights, injustices, abuses of power," explained Tunisian director Abdellatif Ben Ammar, "but the state did not want us to question, it did not want us to help the masses understand that you couldn't just listen, couldn't just be the perfect pupils of the nation, that a leader could not think for us."[510] And so, the state started closing Ciné-clubs operated by the FTCC and banning post-screening debates. In 1970 the film service at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, under orders from the Central government, expanded visa requirements for film projections in Ciné-clubs. Even when the films had already obtained a visa, the ministry argued that these visas only included a public projection, not a public debate.[511] "The scope of the repression grew," explained Tahar Cheriaa, "and all notion of debate became suspect and was repressed."[512]

The struggle between the members of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Central government was constant throughout the 1970s. The Ministry was one of the few spaces in which resistance to Bourguiba's regime thrived, but it was under intense surveillance from the regime, which did not hesitate to regularly arrest FTCC members

[509] Morgan Corriou, "Cinéphilie et engagement estudiantin en Tunisie, » *op.cit.*
[510] Abdellatif Ben Amar, interview with author, May 30th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[511] *Ibid.*
[512] Tahar Cheriaa, interviewed by Samira Dami, cited in "En passant par les écoles et les lycées," Kaiser Cheriaa, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.

and film directors when they took too much liberty. "We were surrounded by snitches," explained Hassan Daldoul, "All they needed to say [the snitches] was that you were preparing the revolution, and then direct to the *zalzal* [the dungeon], where you were tortured, you can't imagine what they did to them…"[513]

Tahar Cheriaa himself was imprisoned by the Tunisian government. The story of Cheriaa's imprisonment varies greatly depending on who tells it. According to Férid Boughedir, longtime admirer and friend of Cheriaa, it was Cheriaa's desire to liberate Tunisian screens from American and European control that resulted in his six-month-long imprisonment. Vexed by Cheriaa's efforts to reclaim Tunisian screens, the same companies that had boycotted Tunisia in 1964 created a damning file against Cheriaa. "They claimed that he stole money from cinemas, that he slept with his secretary, and all sorts of other calumnies," explained Boughedir.[514]

> They sent this to Bourguiba. Now usually, Bourguiba tore up this sort of thing, but this time there was this Algerian poet, Moufti Zakaria, who owned a movie theater in Tunis, that brought Bourguiba some poems, and amongst them was this file against Tahar Cheriaa, claiming that a communist was infiltrated in Bourguiba's administration, and, let's be clear, Bourguiba did not like communists or the Kremlin. And there was proof, since in 1964 when Cheriaa was trying to reclaim Tunisian screens he had travelled to Paris to visit Sov Export Films, and asked them if, in case of an American boycott, if they would be willing to provide films to Tunisian cinemas. This alone was proof to Bourguiba of Cheriaa's communist sympathies. So Bourguiba sent him to jail, because Bourguiba was very hotheaded, so without a trial or anything he sent him to jail. We went to visit him, he was our president, our director, we brought him oranges.[515]

According to Mohamed Challouf, Cheriaa was imprisoned for eight months, and was only liberated with the help of his Sub-Saharan colleagues, just in time to join the 1969

[513] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[514] Férid Boughedir, interview with author, June 12th 2018, Paris, France.
[515] *Ibid.*

Pan-African Festival of Algiers. Challouf explained that it was Ababacar Samb, the Senegalese filmmaker, who circulated a petition at the PANAF film symposium demanding Cheriaa's release—a petition which filmmakers from across Africa signed and sent to Bourguiba.[516] Yet another version of the story of Cheriaa's imprisonment comes from Algerian film critic and administrator Ahmed Bedjaoui, who claimed that Cheriaa had been imprisoned by Bourguiba when the PANAF opened up in Algiers. Filmmakers from across Africa, all present in Algiers, signed a petition which they delivered to Boumédiène, asking him to put pressure on Bourguiba to release Cheriaa. When Bourguiba did, Boumédiène chartered a plane to pick up Cheriaa from Tunis and deliver him to the PANAF.[517] All of these stories contributed to Cheriaa's lionization as a father of African cinema, as a Pan-African hero who used the medium and industry of film to defy the state.

*The JCC and Radicalization From Without*

If the Ciné-clubs attracted and molded young activists who challenged the Tunisian government specifically, the JCC helped to inscribe this dissidence into a global network denouncing colonialism and imperialism across the Third-World. Beginning in 1968, what had started as a Tunisian project, a project conceived by Tunisian functionaries and subsidized by the Tunisian state, began to escape the Tunisian state's control, and started broadcasting the Maghreb Generation's ideology of revolutionary Pan-Africanism and Third-Worldism—an ideology far from Bourguiba's optimal foreign policy. Throughout the 1970s, the debates and screenings at the JCC were suffused with

[516] Mohammed Challouf, interview with author, November 6th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[517] Ahmed Bedjaoui, interview with author, March 13th 2018, Algiers, Algeria.

the language of revolution and militancy, often foregoing any aesthetic consideration and privileging films that felt radical, or that challenged established power paradigms. To Sembène, the JCC was "Africa's vengeance."[518] To Algerian Mahmoud Ben Salama, the JCC was a strategic pole that worked, fervently, for an accelerated decolonization of subjugated cinemas.[519] To European observers this trend was threatening: Victor Bachy from the daily Belgian paper, *La Libre Belgique*, wrote that "the JCC has demonstrated the victory of militant movies [...] it preaches, implicitly or not, violence, hate, and vengeance. It is a never-ending chain, alas."[520]

These changes in the JCC's rhetoric were largely spurred by the sub-Saharan filmmakers that had become staples of the Carthage festival, such as Ousmane Sembène, Guadeloupean director Sarah Maldoror, or Mauritanian Med Hondo.[521] As Ousmane Sembène noted: "It is not Tunisia that made Carthage, it is the Africans."[522] Sarah Maldoror explained that Carthage was the city where African filmmakers learned to look at themselves, "we were watching our movies, our dances, our histories, our loves, and

[518] Ousmane Sembène, "Témoignages sur les JCC : Réstrospective Carthage 1966-76, » *Ecrans de Tunisie*, Numéro 3, Published by the Tunisian government in Octobre 1986, Hassan Daldoul, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[519] Mahmoud Ben Salama, "Témoignages sur les JCC : Rétrospective Carthage 1966-76, » *op.cit.*
[520] "Les Vème journées cinématographiques de Carthage à travers la presse internationale: un éventail savoureux de commentaires," *Dialogue*, numéro 16, 23-29 December 1974, réaction de "La Libre Belgique" (14 novembre 1974), Tunisian National Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[521] Though Maldoror was born in France, of Guadeloupean parents, she is widely considered a Sub-Saharan filmmaker due to her lifelong dedication to the Angolan cause, and to her close ties to the MPLA (in particular through her husband Mario de Andrade). As Murphy writes in his Introduction to *Africa's Lost Classics*: "Her [Maldoror] films display a deep commitment to the history of the liberation struggles of African peoples, which has earned her honorary status as an African filmmaker." [Murphy, "Introduction," *op.cit*., p. 10].
[522] Ousmane Sembène, Interview with Tahar Cheriaa, "Ousmane Sembène: Carthage et le cinéma africain," *Cinema Quebec*, Montreal, Volume 3, Issue 9-10, (January 1974), pp. 50-52.

our dreams. There by crossing gazes we understood our differences. We were watching others, no longer being watched."[523]

Liberation groups from sub-Saharan Africa were a permanent presence in Carthage, till the end of the 1970s, explained festival director and producer Néjib Ayed. Groups like the FRELIMO, the MPLA, the African National Congress (ANC), and others were at the center of all the discussions, "we would always remind everyone that they were there, why they were there, what the struggle was, and we would debate furiously about apartheid, colonialism, southern Rhodesia."[524] In constant contact with members of these liberation groups, and anti-colonial and imperial activists from across Africa and the Third-World, the young Tunisians who attended the JCC nurtured the political consciousness that they had sowed in the Ciné-clubs. "All of the African films were political, were in opposition to authoritarian states" remembered Daldoul. When these filmmakers came to Carthage, the young Tunisians peppered them with questions, advice, "you can't imagine what kind of points of view they helped us develop, how they liberated our ideas," marveled Daldoul, "They were making oppositional films, critiquing religion, male domination, sexual repression…"[525]

Many of the sub-Saharan African directors also showed solidarity with Tunisia's disenchanted youth, urging them to continue to fight for freedom of speech in a country sinking deeper and deeper into authoritarianism. In her memoirs, *Instants de Vie*, Tunisian writer and activist Jelila Hafsia recalled that in October 1968, during a JCC debate, the Greco-Ethiopan director Nikos Papatakis stood up in front of a crowded room

[523] *Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage, Quatre Décennies*, (Tunis: Ministère de la Culture, de la Jeunesse et des Loisirs de Tunisie, 2004), Salah Al Dhaoui, Personal Archives, La Marsa, Tunisia.
[524] Néjib Ayad, interview with author, June 6th 2018.
[525] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

and read a letter of protest; "The letter concerned the imprisoned students and the hunger-strike that had started the previous day. Most of the people in the room, many of them festival-goers, joined him in signing the letter of support."[526] Hafsia noted that "for all these countries, the problems are the same, and cinema is a weapon."[527]

Many of the most militant films were presented by Sub-Saharan directors, direct critiques of the corruption and abuse of public funds such as Malian directors Souleymane Cissé's *Baara*. But it was Sembène, above all, who dictated the rhetoric of the JCC. Scholars, in heralding Sembène as the "father of American cinema," have conveyed the impression that African film's dominant aesthetic was Sembène's own politically-motivated social realism, notes David Murphy.[528] Sembène did not tell elite stories, instead he filmed the working class, the farmers, in an effort to draw attention to their difficult life conditions. Sembène played a large part in disseminating the image of a politically motivated director, during interviews he was prone "to making strident political attacks on both the former colonial powers and what he viewed as the corrupt, culturally alienated, and bourgeois-led neo-colonial states that replaced them," explained Murphy.[529] The fact that Sembène had trained in Moscow added to the image he projected of a director primarily interested in portraying the hardships of the working class. Like other members of the Maghreb Generation, Sembène was influenced by

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[526] Jelila Hafsia, *Instants de Vie : Chronique Familière, Tome II*, (Tunis : Self-Published, 2009), p. 94.
[527] *Ibid.*
[528] David Murphy explains that this perception has been dominant in most studies of African cinema, until recently when a few scholars have challenged this narrative and revived the works of the African "mavericks" such as Djibril Diop Mambety [David Murphy, "Introduction," in *Africa's Lost Classics, op.cit.*] For more see: [Kenneth Harrow, *Trash: African Cinema from Below* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Alexie Tcheuyap, *Postcolonialist African Cinema* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), Manthia Diawara, *African Film: New Forms of Aesthetics and Politics* (New York: Prestel, 2010)]. Social realism refers to work by artists who were concerned with portraying the actual labor and life conditions of the working-class.
[529] Murphy, "Introduction," *op.cit*., p. 56.

Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon and he rejected all forms of spiritual and cultural mystification. Instead, Sembène lobbied for direct action: "the gods never prevented colonialism from establishing itself," he argued in 1976, "when the enemy is right there, he has to be fought with weapons."[530] Though not all African directors necessarily followed in Sembène's social-realist footsteps, the call from Carthage was for ideologically motivated films and not for films that engaged in art for art's sake or for personal pursuits.

*Sarah Maldoror the JCC's forlorn female fighter of the Maghreb Generation*

Sarah Maldoror was one of the few female directors who won any acclaim at the JCC in the 1970s. The JCC, like the PANAF, *Souffles* and other Maghrebi cultural projects led by the Maghreb Generation, was primarily the domain of men. Most of the men I interviewed commented on Maldoror's strength, she was a fighter, I heard again and again. Maldoror, who was born in the South of France in 1939 from Guadeloupean parents, had, like Sembène, studied film at the Moscow Film Academy. While she and Mario de Andrade were living in Algiers with their two daughters, she assisted director Gillo Pontecorvo in his filming of *The Battle of Algiers*. She made her first short film, *Monangambeee*, based on a short story by Angolan militant-writer Luandino Vieira, in 1969 with the support of the Algerian government. The movie, only seventeen minutes long, told the story of a woman who visits her husband, wrongfully imprisoned, under suspicion of dissidence, in a jail cell of Luanda, Angola. All of the white characters were

[530] Ousmane Sembène, Interview with Noureddine Ghali, in John D.H. Downing (ed), *Film and Politics in the Third World* (New York City: Praeger, 1987).

played by amateur Algerian actors. The film won the prize for best director at the JCC in 1970.

Sarah Maldoror's second film *Sambizanga* also won big at the JCC, garnering the prestigious Tanit d'Or in 1972. The film tells the story of Maria and Domingos, who blissfully enjoyed life with their baby until Domingos was arrested by the Portuguese authorities on charges of political activism. Maldoror's film follows Maria as she searches for her husband, being turned away by officials, and punctuated by her cries "Domingos![531] The film is poignant. It privileges a class analysis over a racial one, unlike, for instance, Sembène's film *La Noire de..*,. which centered on racial violence. The emphasis is on the oppression of the poor by the rich, on a system that favored a minority over the majority. At one point, when Maria is escorted out of a police station by a Black police officer she screams at him: "get off me you shitty turncoat, you are with the White, you make us suffer."[532] Maldoror was not interested in race, or nationality, "What does it in fact mean to be French, Swedish, Senegalese or Guadeloupian?" she queried in a 1974 interview, "Nationalities and borders between countries have to disappear. Besides this, the color of a person's skin is of no interest to me. What's important is what the person is doing."[533] Through films like *Monogambeee* and *Sambizanga*, Maldoror demonstrated that women were agents of change and mobilization in Angola, and in Africa more generally, defying the pervasive perception of anticolonial liberation efforts as a male responsibility.

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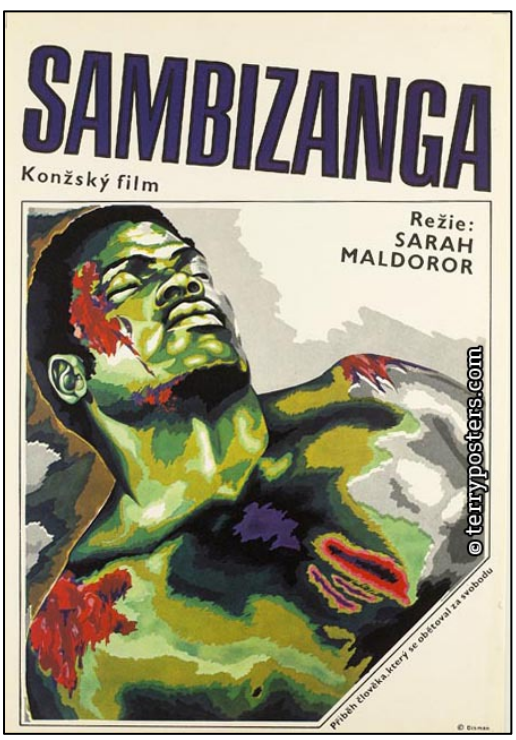
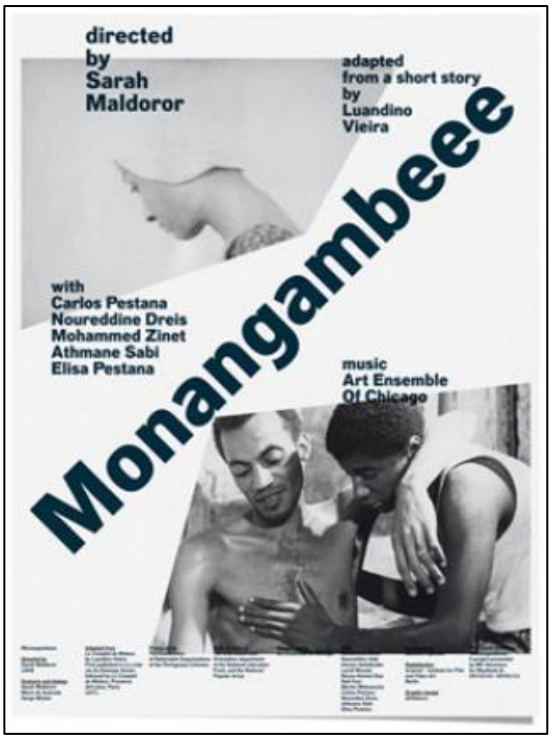
[531] Basia Lewandowska Cummings, "The Films of Sarah Maldoror," *Africa is a Country*, October 27th, 2010, https://africasacountry.com/2011/10/the-films-of-sarah-maldoror.
[532] Sarah Maldoror, *Sambizanga*, (Angola: Isabelle Films, 1972), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvoaUprC5bg.
[533] Sarah Maldoror, "On Sambizanga," *Women and the Cinema: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton, 1977), p. 308; Beti Ellerson (ed.), *Sisters of the Screen: Women of Africa on Film* Video, and Television, (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2000).




Posters for *Sambizanga* (1974) and *Monogambeee* (1969), by Sarah Maldoror

Though Maldoror's style resembled Sembène's in its realistic depiction of poverty, injustice, and suffering, Maldoror was committed not only to a cinema for the people, but to a cinema for women in particular. "I'm only interested in women who struggle," she explained in a 1974 interview. With her films she wanted to inspire and support women who wanted to work in film, in the hopes that that would help grow the number of women in the film industry, since, she claimed, "Men aren't likely to help women do that. Both in Africa and in Europe woman remains the slave of man. That's why she has to liberate herself."[534]

Maldoror took her struggle to liberate women to the JCC. Though she was practically the only woman to receive any acclaim in the 1970s, she wasn't one to accept a marginal position. She was there to fight for Africa and for women, for she considered

[534] *Ibid.*

"film to be the best way of liberating women," remembered Tunisian Jelila Hafsia, who met Maldoror in Carthage.[535] Hassan Daldoul remembered Maldoror' intensity: "discussion about males and females, for that I adored her. She was violent, in-your-face. She defended the Muslim women. Of course, I teased her, but she knew that I didn't mean it."[536] Daldoul went on to discuss how free Black women, as opposed to Arab women, were with their bodies.

Issue of race and sex were intimately intertwined during Pan-African reunions such as the JCC or the PANAF. Hassan Daldoul's supposed "teasing" of Maldoror and his comments on the "liberty" of Black bodies, reveal the layers of annoyance and stigma women like Maldoror faced at the JCC. In interviews conducted by the Tunisian press in the 1970s, Maldoror refused to discuss her private life and her marriage with Andrade, perhaps exasperated at being always associated with a man, or perhaps because, as a Black woman in the Maghreb, she needed to build walls around her intimate life.[537]

Though Maldoror, as a Black woman, may have felt uncomfortable at the JCC, many Tunisian and Sub-Saharan participants lauded Tunisia's exceptional treatment of women. Indeed, Bourguiba's government had worked hard to portray Tunisia as an exceptional place in Africa and the Middle East to be a woman. In January 1957, Bourguiba put into effect the Code of Personal Status, a series of laws that granted women the right to choose their own husband, to demand monogamy, to divorce, and to

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[535] Hafsia, *Instants de Vie II, op.cit.,* p. 69.
[536] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[537] An October 1972 interview for *La Presse*, the reporter described Maldoror thus: "Tall, dark-haired, beautiful, always dynamic, and never taking herself too seriously, Sarah Maldoror remains in any case a model of femininity itself. She rebels against any questions that regard her personal life and categorically refuses to answer. She still responded to some of our questions, laughing raucously at intervals. « Sarah Maldoror : Ce Festival est très important pour nous, » *La Presse*, October 5th 1972, p. 10, Centre de Documentation Nationale, Tunis, Tunisia. Maldoror also refused to discuss her private life with me during our interview.

adopt children (without necessarily being married). A series of reforms instituted over the course of Bourguiba's first twenty years of rule authorized women to work, create bank accounts, start businesses, access abortions, and use contraception (all of this without the authorization of their husbands).[538]

In 2014, Charlotte Naccache, wife of Tunisian painter Edgar Naccache, talked of the political revolution that Bourguiba had orchestrated in order to liberate the Tunisian woman, something, she claimed, hitherto unseen in the Arab world, and perhaps even in the entire world: "Tunisian women should give their wedding bands, or even all of their gold jewelry, and melt it into a gigantic gold statue of Bourguiba to be placed right in the middle of Tunis," she explained her voice faltering with emotion, "The Tunisian woman owes everything to him!"[539] One JCC participant, Ynousse N'Diaye, the star of Sembène's film *Le Mandat*, also remarked on how wonderful Tunisia was for women. "I admire Habib Bourguiba so much," she said in a 1968 interview, "We love him in Senegal. He is the only president who cares about the evolution of women."[540]

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[538] Mustapha Kraiem, *État et Société dans la Tunisie Bourguibienne* (Tunis: La Maghrébine, 2011), pp. 292-8 ; Michel Camau, (ed.) *Tunisie au Présent: une modernité au-dessus de tout soupçon?* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1987), and Ridha Kefi, "Et Bourguiba libéra la femme," *Jeune Afrique*, August 28th 2009, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/LIN27086etbouemmefa0/.

[539] Charlotte Naccache, interview with author, March 26th 2014, Paris, France.

[540] Ynousse N'Diaye, *TAP*, October 14th 1968, Salah Al Dhaoui personal archives. Echoes of European admiration for Bourguiba's emancipation of Tunisian women were also visible in Western press. A 1969 article in the French paper *Le Monde* reads: "If not for the few women walking by, draped in the traditional white veil [...] it is difficult to walk around the streets of Tunis without believing that we are in Italy, or in the South of France. At hotels, at the post office, in the shops and offices, young polite, joyous and efficient women act with more ease that on the other side of the Mediterranean." [Bernheim, Nicole, "L'expérience sans complexes de la Tunisie," *Le Monde*, January 6th 1969, http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1969/01/06/iii-l-experience-sans-complexes-de-la-tunisie_2421597_1819218.html#XEoXbHEdEXIMJE3U.99]

*Med Hondo: The Mauritanian Militant of the Maghreb Generation*

Mauritanian director Med Hondo's racial identity bridged the gap between North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Born of a Mauritanian mother and a Senegalese father, Hondo, like many other members of the Maghreb Generation was multilingual: he spoke Wolof, French, and Arabic. Hondo was another militant-star of the JCC, where he won the 1974 Tanit d'or for his film *Les Bicots-nègres vos voisins*, which denounced the living conditions of Black and Maghrebi immigrants in France. Hondo also received acclaim for his 1970 film *Soleil Ô*, which began with an animated skit showing an African pawn of Western Imperialism being catapulted to power, only to have that power taken away from him by that same Western Imperialism.[541] Living in Paris for most of his life, in voluntary exile, Hondo turned to film, he explained, to find his place in the world and to make images of Africa for an African audience.[542] Much like Sembène, Hondo was a committed revolutionary, as his friend and *Souffles* contributor, poet André Laude, described him, Hondo "endured the tragedy of Africa and the Third-World as if it was a cosmic event. He carried all the wounds of his brothers, of the marginalized with him."[543] Hondo's films denounced the conditions of Black and Arab immigrants in France, but also the greed and corruption of African politicians. According to Laude, Hondo had a film project entitled "Et sonnera l'heure des brasiers," (an homage to Argentinian Fernando Solanas 1968 film "La hora de los hornos,") which would portray the anti-neocolonial struggles in Africa and the "white-negroes who sold out their countries to the imperial power, and blush with importance because, coming out of European universities

[541] Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *Black African Cinema, op.cit.,* , p. 80.
[542] Med Hondo, "The Cinema of Exile," in *Film and Politics in the Third World*, *op.cit.,* pp. 69-76.
[543] Laude, *Joyeuse Apocalypse*, *op.cit.,* p. 140.

and having become VIPs they get to shake de Gaulle's hand, or that of humanity's butcher: Richard Nixon."[544] Hondo never made the film, but many of his films denounced what he called these "white-negroes" the turncoat dictators, the same people Jean Sénac called "monkeys," and Abdellatif Ben Amar "windup monkeys."[545]


Posters for Med Hondo's *Soleil Ô* (1970) and *Les Bicots-Nègres vos voisins* (1974).

Like the members of *Souffles* and Sénac, Hondo was convinced that Africa was not yet decolonized. According to Hondo the relationships between the African continent and the rest of the world were still entirely predicated on the whims of the imperial powers. Be it for "peanuts, tomatoes, fish, […] or film, […] there are people who produce, and people who consume […]" explained Hondo, "and be careful because this could lead to a recolonization, and a much more subtle one, before it was the big cannon that went boom, but now the canon hurts a lot more and is invisible, it is much more subtle and much more pernicious and dangerous."[546]

[544] *Ibid.*
[545] See : Abdellatif Laâbi, "Les Singes électroniques," *Souffles* 16-17, (4th Trimester 1969), p. 40.
[546] Med Hondo, cited in Férid Boughedir, *Caméra d'Afrique, op. cit.*

Though both Hondo and Maldoror's cinematic style differed considerably from Sembène's, they aligned with him on the questions of cinema's revolutionary purpose. Scholar David Murphy and others have recently argued that the common representation of Sembène as the "father of African cinema" has skewed scholars' vision of African cinema as purely ideologically motivated and less concerned with aesthetic experimentation.[547] While Murphy's argument is valid for African film in general, the African filmmakers who travelled to Carthage in the 1970s were committed to revolutionary cinema as a way to mobilize the African masses against colonialism and imperialism. The general message of the JCC was that films that did not engage their audience politically were not welcome. The JCC thus became a bastion for the type of militant culture that thrived in Rabat in the early 1960s, and in the margins of the PANAF in the late 1960s. This culture was one of revolutionary militancy, one that lauded military action, celebrated guns, and appealed primarily to male participants and spectators.

The JCC, however, unlike *Souffles* and the Off-PANAF, seemed to have a little more room for female participation. Perhaps this was thanks to Maldoror's constant struggle to portray, collaborate with, and train women. Perhaps it was, indeed, because Bourguiba had made Tunisia a more welcoming country for all women, at least, more so than Morocco and Algeria. The women around *Souffles* seemed to primarily take on a secretarial role and those who appeared in the accounts of the PANAF were largely sexual representations of their race and nationality. At the JCC, however, not only were there a few women participants, but many of the male filmmakers I interviewed discussed

[547]Murphy, "Introduction," *op.cit*.

their desire to film movies about women's social condition. Tunisian directors Abdellatif Ben Amar and Hassan Daldoul explained that they did not want to make movies glorifying Bourguiba's struggle for Tunisian independence, instead they wanted to make movies defending women's causes.

*The Fédération Panafricaine des Cinéastes*

Perhaps one of the largest and most enduring projects the JCC inspired was the creation of the FEPACI (the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers). Though many Algerian artists and filmmakers claim that the FEPACI was founded at the Pan-African Festival of Algiers in 1969, Tunisian director Férid Boughedir conceded that though the idea was aired in Algeria, it was at the 1970 JCC that the Federation was actually born.[548] The real exploit of the FEPACI, Boughedir explained, was to unite filmmakers from different linguistic zones. This union worked because they were fighting a common enemy, Boughedir explained, "the big western film distribution companies that used African theaters to make their own films profitable and use all sorts of insidious methods to extinguish the budding cinema that is African cinema."[549] The members of the FEPACI pressured their governments to nationalize the sectors of distribution and exhibition of African film—to nationalize the screens so as to break foreign monopolies and to give African films a chance of appearing on African screens. The FEPACI had

[548] As scholar Mantha Diawara has argued, Sub-Saharan filmmakers were benefitting from the experience of their North African neighbors, who had already nationalized their film industries and had defined policies of distribution, production, and exhibition. Mantha Diawara, "The Artist as the Leader of the Revolution: the History of the Federation Panafricaine des Cineastes," in Michael T. Martin (ed.), *Cinemas of the Black Diaspora: Diversity Dependence, and Oppositionality*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 95-110, p. 99.
[549] Férid Boughedir, "Connaissance du Cinéma Africain" *ACECOP liaison,* Mai-Juin 1975, p16, Kaiser Cheriaa, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.

some success: both Upper-Volta and Mali nationalize their cinematographic industries in 1970, Senegal and Benin created their own distribution houses in 1974, and Madagascar nationalized its screens in 1975.

Because most of the filmmakers and producers who created the FEPACI were leftists and Pan-Africanist members of the Maghreb Generation, the FEPACI's primary mission was to unite the continent and to use film to mobilize the African masses against colonialism and neocolonialism. That is why the FEPACI initially sought to be affiliated to the Organization of African Unity (OAU).[550] "It was strange to see a professional federation of filmmakers have that much power," Boughedir noted, "the FEPACI was everywhere, [...] it had the status of observing member at the OAU, it had open access to all African governments, [...] it drafted bills, it was active, powerful…"[551]

In January 1975 the filmmakers of the FEPACI met for a second congress in Algiers in order to clarify the Federation's vision for the role of the African filmmakers *vis-à-vis* their people. African filmmakers must refuse the stereotypical image of the solitary and marginal creator, explained the Algiers Charter on African Cinema, "the African filmmakers must, on the contrary consider themselves a creative artisan at the service of their people."[552] In that context, read the Charter, African filmmakers needed to be in solidarity with filmmakers from across the Third World who struggled against imperialism. Money should never be a gage of success, warned the Federation, instead a successful African film should express the needs and aspirations of the African people.

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[550] Mantha Diawara, "The Artist as the Leader of the Revolution," *op.cit.,* p. 99.
[551] Férid Boughedir, interview with author, Paris, June 12th 2018.
[552] Ridha Najar, "IIeme congres de la FE.PA.CI pour un cinema africaine authentique," *Dialogue*, Number 21, 27 January-February 1975, and Imruh Bakari and Mbye B. Cham, *African Experience of Cinema*, *op.cit.,* p. 25.

At the congress several filmmakers, apparently, denounced movies such as *Pousse Pousse* (1975) by Daniel Kamwa and *Le Bracelet de Bronze* (1974) by Tidiane Aw for being too sensationalist and not committed to the revolution against neocolonialism. "On the other hand," writes film scholars Mantha Diawara, "the films of Sembène, Med Hondo and Mahama Traoré were praised for deemphasizing the sensational and commercial aspects and emphasizing the instructional values [of film]."[553]

The manifesto ended by cautioning African governments to free African filmmakers from the shackles of censorship, for the "freedom of expression for film-makers is in fact one of the prerequisite conditions of their ability to contribute to the development of a critical understanding among the masses and the blossoming of their potentialities."[554] Indeed, one of the other main enemies of the FEPACI, which Boughedir did not mention in our interview, were African states themselves. The FEPACI stood firmly against any type of censorship that could "impoverish the creativity of the filmmaker and the democratic and responsible practice of his or her job."[555] While filmmakers struggled for the nationalization of distribution and exhibition, most resisted nationalizing the production sector. Filmmakers did not want to produce newsreels glorifying their own governments, they wanted—they needed—the freedom to express themselves "in manners that were not always flattering to their governments," explained Mantha Diawara.[556]

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[553] Mantha Diawara, "The Artist as the Leader of the Revolution," *op.cit.,* p. 102
[554] *Ibid.*
[555] Deuxième congrès de la FEPACI à Alger le 15-19 Janvier 1975, p. 17, Kaiser Cheriaa, Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia.
[556] Mantha Diawara, "The Artist as the Leader of the Revolution," *op.cit.,* p. 100.

In the 1960s, and early 1970s, Tahar Cheriaa explained, thanks to a process of collective reflection made possible by the JCC, and the FEPACI congresses, African filmmakers were able to make a fairly realistic assessment of the cinematic situation in their own states. They were under the impression, however, that all they needed to do was pair their own desire to make film with that of the state, which they believed was also intent on creating national and Pan-African cinematic industries. "Feeling themselves so rich with things to say and imagining themselves to be free to say them," wrote Tahar Cheriaa, "they believed the states to be similarly disposed and never doubted their freedom of action."[557] They had no idea what the reality was, Cheriaa bemoaned. For, while the goal of the FEPACI was to help African states nationalize their screens, it rapidly became clear that many African governments were not working with the same interests in mind.

While the FEPACI was invested in producing Pan-African and liberationist films, the governments were usually more interested in national propaganda films. The Senegalese government, for instance, exported independently-made films by Sembène, under the guise of exporting national government-made films, all the while refusing to show the films on screens within Senegal. Sembène's harsh depictions of life in rural Senegal threatened the image Senghor wanted to depict of Senegal domestically. On the other hand, Senghor took pride in having filmmakers of talent to export and showcase abroad. The Senegalese state was capitalizing on the aesthetic of the Maghreb Generation, the art of revolution, without suffering the consequences of what exhibiting that art domestically would mean for the Senegalese regime's sovereignty.

[557] Tahar Cheriaa, "African Cinema and the Headshrinkers: Looking Back at a Strategy for Liberation," in Imruh Bakari and Mbye B. Cham (eds.), *African Experience of Cinema*, *op.cit.,* p. 43.

Furthermore, even in the halls of the FEPACI and amongst friends, accusations of collaboration flew. The shadow of the western distribution companies and of the controlling African governments lurked everywhere, and many filmmakers were charged with complacency, with selling out, or worse, with collaboration. Sarah Maldoror, one of the FEPACI's only women filmmakers, never one to mince words, exclaimed in 1972: "the struggle of the colonized peoples of Africa is continuing in solitude. Angolans, Mozambicans, and others are abandoned in a desert of fraternity, and maggoty solidarity. Everybody sympathizes, morally participates in our drama, but in reality, each "brother" country takes care of their own affairs, so for the safari pictures you can come back later!"[558]

**Conclusion: The JCC becomes Red-Carpet Regalia**

By March 1982, the FEPACI met again in Niamey, Niger, to reassess the relationship between states and filmmakers, specifically because so many African states had only financed films that glorified the government and the nation-state. While at the FEPACI's creation in 1970, and at the second congress in Algiers in 1975, private companies had been portrayed as the agents of Western imperialism, in 1982 they were described as "opérateurs économiques," and portrayed as indispensable to the growth of African film.[559] The rhetoric of the FEPACI had changed. Its leaders, in an effort to move away from away from African governments considered too controlling, fell back into the

[558] Sarah Maldoror, in Mourad Bourboune, "Nos Mutuelles différences, » *Les nouvelles littéraires,* numéro 2/353, 5 novembre 1972, Centre de Documentation Nationale, Tunis, Tunisia.
[559] Mantha Diawara, "The Artist as the Leader of the Revolution," *op.cit.,* p. 103; and Férid Boughedir, "Le nouveau credo des cineastes Africains: le Manifeste de Niamey," *Cinemaction*, number 26, 1982, p. 168, Kaiser Cheriaa Personal Archives, Tunis, Tunisia; and Férid Boughedir, "A Cinema fighting for its Liberation," in Michael T. Martin (ed.), *Cinemas of the Black Diaspora: Diversity Dependance, and Oppositionality, op.cit.*, pp. 111-117.

arms of  European cinematic companies. The Maghreb Generation had lost. Many of the people that I interviewed in 2018 bemoaned the current state of cinema production in Africa: "all we make now are movies about jihadists and immigrants," exclaimed Daldoul, "What the French are interested in."[560] In the end, wrote Tahar Cheriaa in 1978, "we underestimated the inexhaustible adaptability of the monopolies involved."[561]

Most of the filmmakers, producers, and film aficionados that I interviewed agreed that by the end of the 1970s, the JCC had sold out. Explanations as to why differed. To some, such as Abdellatif Ben Amar, it was the creation of the FESPACO, the JCC's sub-Saharan twin in Ouagadougou, that brought down Carthage. The FESPACO was founded as an alternative to the JCC, Ben Amar explained, because Carthage was gaining too much traction, so the French helped create the FESPACO—a festival that would promote a less-threatening Black identity and would no longer bring together the Maghreb Generation.

To others, like Néjib Ayed, it was the Tunisian state that betrayed the JCC by turning it into a stage for Egyptian stars to parade. By the end of the 1980s, Tunisian filmmaker Rachid Fachiouk inherited the direction of the Festival. Fachiouk was a man known for his contacts in the Middle-East. Under his supervision, explained Ayed, "we would invite all the Egyptian stars, the Egyptian delegation would come at 50 or 60 people, which was huge, at that point African film became marginal, that's when the big break happened."[562] The JCC's changing message was visible in the Festival's program. The programs for the 1966, 1968, 1972, and 1974 editions, all published by the Tunisian

[560] Hassan Daldoul, interview with author, June 8th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.
[561] Tahar Cheriaa, "African Cinema and the Headshrinkers," *op.cit.,* p. 44.
[562] Néjib Ayed, interview with author, June 6th 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

government, did not include any advertisements. However, starting in 1978, the programs, still published by the Tunisian government, contained a number of advertisements—in fact the first nine pages of the 1978 program consisted solely of commercials for hotels, beer, banks, Egyptair and more. Clearly the years of communist sympathy were over.

The JCC, like many of the projects that I explore in this dissertation, started as a state-sponsored cultural endeavor, one designed to propagate a certain conception of Pan-Africanism, in line with that of the Tunisian government and with Bourguiba's vision more specifically. But, as I illustrate with case studies from across the Maghreb, it was almost impossible for these young Maghrebi states to completely control interactions between members of the Maghreb Generation. Words were bound to be exchanged, observations made, and actions planned. In the end, the JCC went well beyond the initial desires of the Tunisian state, becoming a space for younger members of the Maghreb Generation to politicize themselves and others through film. Like their poet-peers, they argued that their mission was to use art to push African people to action, to drive them to reclaim power from the postcolonial states. It is true that by the 1980s the JCC had forsaken its original mission, and espoused all the glitz and glamour of Film Festivals around the world. But the story of the JCC in in the late 1960s and 1970s, demonstrate that for a brief moment, postcolonial culture was not just the domain of the postcolonial states. Thanks to members of the Maghreb Generation like Maldoror, Hondo, and their peers, postcolonial culture also thrived in the margins of state-sponsored events, taking advantage of the capital that the state invested, while finding alternative sites to express outrage at the state's growing authoritarianism and searching for ways to combat it.

## Epilogue. On Literature, Creolity, and the Monetization of Revolution

*"Dans le fracas des armes qui de nos jours déchirent la séculaire nuit coloniale, de jeunes poètes militent au cœur même du maquis. Ils réalisent la nécessaire synthèse de l'engagement politique et du besoin inéluctable de dire le vrai, le juste, le beau."*[563]

*« In the clamor of weapons which are ripping apart the colonial night, young poets fight in the heart of the maquis. They know the necessary synthesis of political engagement and the inevitable need to say the truth, the just, the beautiful."*

- Mario de Andrade, 1966

This dissertation has taken the reader from Rabat, through Algiers, to Tunis, and has introduced them to the group I call the Maghreb Generation. Through primary sources, historical analysis, and, I hope, some amount of good-old storytelling, this dissertation reconstructs their moves, their friendships, their intimate relationships, and their artistic production. The men and women of the Maghreb Generation, many of whom have never been the subject of historical inquiry, spent their lives, and sometimes lost them, fighting for a postcolonial order in which they had agency, freedom, and beauty. Because many of the members of the Maghreb Generation were poets and filmmakers, their demands may seem lyrical, nebulous, even quixotic to historians who favor the authority of state archives.

Perhaps this is why figures like Jean Sénac, René Depestre, Sarah Maldoror, Med Hondo, Mario de Andrade, and Ted Joans, have been restricted to the realm of literary critique. This dissertation reveals, however, that just because they wrote in verse did not mean that they did not have political claims. Alongside their careers as militant poets and filmmakers, these men and women engaged in direct political action. In Rabat, Algiers, and Tunis, they participated in protests, shipped armaments, conducted military training,

[563] Mario de Andrade, "Postface," *La Poésie Africaine d'expression portugaise, anthologie* (Paris: Jean Pierre Oswald, 1969).

organized secret meetings, and disseminated banned literature – they did the work of revolution. By separating artistic production from political engagement, scholars have neglected the militant-artists who straddled the two worlds. We have not adequately challenged and questioned the postcolonial archive.

That is the very subterfuge that many of artist-militants in the 1960s and '70s had already called the West out on. "The occidental idea of culture has gone a long way and has favored a thesis according to which culture is a luxury of the 'over-developed,'" read one of the Pan-African Festival of Algiers' pamphlets.[564] The FRELIMO bulletin published in *Souffles'* nineteenth issue, also proclaimed that art could no longer be separated from life, as was the case in much of the contemporary capitalist world. In "TWO WORDS," a poem published in 1969, Ted Joans explained:

> Some of THEM fear Black poetswords now that Blackpoets dont write in code or metaphor
> Blackpoets who imitated whitepoets from SHAKESPEARE to DYLAN THOMAS
> thus deny their own Blackfolklore
> now the white have reason to get UPTIGHT and some of THEM COWER
> when a BLACKPOET scream or whispers those TWO beautiful words BLACKPOWER!![565]

Black poets, Joans declared, used to write the White poetry of Shakespeare and Dylan Thomas—esoteric poetry in code and metaphor, which was incomprehensible to most. Now, Joans argued, Black poets had found their own poetic language: that of Black Power. By isolating artistic production from political engagement in academic scholarship, we, as scholars, have inadvertently subdued the rallying cry of Black Power.

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[564] Pamphlet published by the Algerian government for the PANAF, in Ted Joan's "A Black Man's Guide to Africa," p. 64, BANC MSS 99/244, Box 5: 16-17, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.
[565] Ted Joans "TWO WORDS," *Black Pow-Wow: Jazz Poems* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1969), p. 20.

The artist-militants of the Maghreb Generation were thinkers in action. They were not poets of the elite, or so they claimed, but the voices of their people. This was a central component of their identity, but an aspect that has rendered them invisible to a generation of scholars who have focused exclusively on the postcolonial states, nationalism, and those actors who leveraged recognizable power through the postcolonial states. Even in the case of those, like Amilcar Cabral, who were prominent politicians as well as poets, very little attention or analysis has been paid to their artistic production. The consequences of this lack of scholarly inquiry are huge. It has flattened and sanitized our understanding of postcolonial Africa. While scholars have offered fine-grained analysis of European and American artists-militants, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, politicizing and historicizing their artistic urges, inspirations, and influences, members of the Maghreb Generation have not been afforded the same depth of analysis. As Yoav Di-Capua notes in *No Exit*, scholars end up portraying these artists-militants as "static signifier[s] of an idea rather than as a contextualized and dynamic human being."[566] Building upon Di-Capua's work, my dissertation demonstrates that separating the Maghreb Generation from their revolutionary or artistic impulses not only dehumanizes these artist-militants, but also renders their revolutionary fervor static once a postcolonial state has been erected.

By not questioning the implicit power structures of the postcolonial archive, we have lost valuable time and resources. Documents have disappeared or been destroyed. Many of the militant-artists of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s are aging, losing their memories, or are dead. Marcelino dos Santos died just this year, on February 10th, 2020. Néjib Ayed,

[566] Yoav Di-Capua, *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre, and Decolonization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), p. 19.

whom I was lucky to interview in June 2018, passed away in fall of 2019, just before the 30th installment of the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage. These men and women leave behind records that their spouses, children, or grandchildren are unsure how to process or share. Many of the descendants are aware that these are historically significant documents but do not have the infrastructure, money, or technical knowledge to sort and archive themselves. I fear that we may lose more valuable documentation if scholars do not help with this colossal and difficult enterprise.

**Bridging Regional Divides through Accepting Creolity**

Another reason for the Maghreb Generation's invisibility has been scholars' marginalization of North Africa in Middle Eastern, Black Atlantic, and African History. The question of the Maghreb's position in the history of Pan-Africanism is what motivated me to start this project over six years ago. At the time, there seemed to be a push to start including the Maghreb in the History of Africa. However, six years later and the Maghreb still is absent from many African History courses, and many positions are advertised as Professorships in Sub-Saharan African History. And yet, the Maghreb is now, and has always been, a hub for people from Africa and the Black Atlantic. Writing the history of the Maghreb's Africanity is essential to understanding the contemporary Maghreb and the present-day political demands of many Black North Africans, as well as those of the thousands of Black immigrants in Algiers, Tangiers, and Tunis today.

Bridging the Saharan divide, the work of the Maghreb Generation demonstrates that scholars of the postcolonial period do well to transcend linguistic, national, and racial divisions in the study of Africa and explore, instead, the ways in which individuals have

always evaded the too-easy appeal of restrictive categories. While the members of the Maghreb Generation sometimes envisioned themselves as part of a national community, they were just as likely to imagine themselves as part of the Pan-African, Black Atlantic, or Third World communities. Like many of us today, they crossed broad swaths of the earth and conceived of their identities as intersectional. The Maghreb Generation spoke Arabic, Portuguese, English, French, Wolof, Kimbundu and more—mixing and splicing these languages in their poetry and film. In many ways, the Maghreb Generation was the embodiment of the type of Creole community philosopher Edouard Glissant yearned for in *The Poetics of Relation*—a community that refused to reduce itself to a single nature or to a single origin.[567] The Maghreb Generation annihilated all false universality, did away with the desire or need for a European audience, and celebrated its Creolity.

When Tahar Ben Jelloun interviewed Ousmane Sembène at the PANAF in July 1969 he queried, "How should African cinema define itself in contrast with Western culture?" Sembène's response was categorical: "Let us not talk about the West. Let's talk about us." Sembène's response is the perfect illustration of the Maghreb Generation's political and cultural philosophy. The Maghreb Generation rejected the Western interlocutor and turned inward to talk amongst themselves. This is not to say that the Maghreb Generation was a racially exclusive group. On the contrary, the Maghreb Generation was decidedly transnational and trans-racial. But what made the Maghreb Generation so exceptional was their refusal to comply with the terms of the former colonial powers. Breaking from the *négritude* movement, and the Pan-Africanism or Pan-

[567] See Edouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (Paris : Gallimard, 1990) ; Edouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris : Gallimard, 1981) ; Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la Créolité* (Paris : Gallimard, 1989).

Arabism of its predecessors, the Maghreb Generation dynamited the arcades of the old humanism and attempted to create a new ideology for the Third-World—one that wove together poetry, film, direct political action, and, what they considered to be, radical acts of love or sex.

**A Failed Project**

The dreams of a transnational Pan-African project that motivated the men and women of the Maghreb Generation have collapsed. Rabat, Algiers, and Tunis have each lost their status as Anti-Imperial Metropolises for the Maghreb Generation. As the 1970s turned to the 1980s, freedom of political and artistic expression was gradually crushed under the iron fist of the new postcolonial states of Hassan II, Houari Boumédiène, and Habib Bourguiba. The Soviets and the Americans waged proxy wars in Angola, Mozambique, and across the African continent, taking advantage of divisions between various factions all vying for power in the newly liberated states. These conflicts stymied most hopes of Pan-African unity.[568] With the end of the Cold War, Capitalism won the battle of ideologies, and both Morocco and Tunisia became playgrounds for wealthy

[568] For more on the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique see: Patrick Chabal*, A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Stephen Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique: The FRELIMO-RENAMO Struggle, 1977-1992* (Solihull, West Midlands: Helion and Company Limited, 2014); William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Origins of War in Mozambique: A History of Unity and Division* (Somerset West, South Africa: African Minds, 2013); Martin Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters (eds.), *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom* (New York: Pathfinder, 2017); Ian Liebenberg, Jorge Risquetm V. G. Shubin, Gert Van des Westhuizen, Hedelberto López Blanch, G. V. Shubin, (eds), *A Far-Away War: Angola (1975-1989)* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2015); Alexandra Marques, *Segredos da descolonização de Angola* (Alfragide: D. Quixote, 2013); Honoré Mbunga, *Angola e a crise pós-independência: Cabinda (1975-2006)* (Luanda: Edições cha de Caxinde, 2014); Christine Messiant, *L'Angola postcolonial* (Paris: Karthala, 2008);

European tourists and retirees, while Algeria sunk into a decade-long civil war that has left the country, and its artists in particular, reeling to this day.[569]

With the end of the Cold War, the threat that revolutionaries, like the members of the Maghreb Generation, posed to Western Capitalism all but died out. In fact, in the past couple decades, many young revolutionaries from the 1960s from the Third-World and Pan-African have been resuscitated from collective amnesia by the very governments that imprisoned, tortured, and murdered them. When I was in Rabat in February 2018, the Royal Library was hosting a conference on Morocco's assistance to the former Portuguese colonies in Southern Africa, under the high patronage of King Mohammed VI. In Morocco, *Souffles* is no longer the taboo that it used to be. Until the late 1990s, it was almost impossible to find copies of the journal, but from 1997 to 2004 two American professors, Thomas C. Spear and Anne George, digitized *Souffles*, and the Moroccan Royal Library uploaded it to their website in 2010. The journal has now entered the pantheon of Moroccan national culture and is being reclaimed by the heir – King Mohammed VI – to the Moroccan government that imprisoned and tortured *Souffles'* members. When I was in Algiers in March 2018, Nourredine Djoudi, former Algerian ambassador to many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, insisted that Morocco had not, in contrast to Algeria, contributed to African liberation movements. Algeria, he claimed, had always been *the* place to be for Black revolutionaries. Finally, when I travelled to Tunis in November 2018 for the 29th edition of the Journées Cinématographiques de

[569] See: Jocelyne Dakhlia*, Tunisie: Le Pays Sans Bruit* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2011); Maati F, interview with author, February 7th 2018, Rabat, Morocco; Lounis Aggoun and Jean-Baptiste Rivoire, *Françalgérie, crimes et mensonges d'états* : *Histoire secrète, de la guerre d'indépendance à la « troisième guerre » d'Algérie* (Paris : Éditions la découverte, 2004) ; Mohammed Samraoui, *Chroniques des années de sang* (Paris : Éditions Denoël, 2003) ; Habib Souaïdia, *La sale guerre* (Paris : Éditions la Découverte, 2001) ; Benjamin Stora, *La guerre invisible : Algérie années 90* (Paris : Presses de Science Po, 2001).

Carthage, the opening speeches and remarks all underscored the deep friendship between the Tunisian state and liberation movements from across Africa. Posters of *Soleil Ô* and *Sambizanga* were framed for all to see in the massive Cité de la Culture in downtown-Tunis. Revolutionaries are now sexy.

The risk, of course, is that the histories of the Maghreb Generation may very well be reclaimed by Maghrebi states that did not support their ideals at the time, and still do not today, in the same ways that Frida Kahlo, Che Guevara, Malcolm X, have been sanitized and monetized by a consumer culture they would very likely despise if they were alive now. As historian Manning Marable notes "Malcolm's X's life story, as outlined by the *Autobiography*, became our quintessential story about the ordeal of being black in America."[570] Between 1965 and 1977, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* sold six million copies worldwide, and the book continues to sell abundantly, both to general readers and to students for whom it is required reading. It has inspired several movies, of which the most famous is Spike Lee's. It has sparked art work, music and a series of tchotchkes from hats, sport bras (to support your breasts by any means necessary) and T-shirts, to his iconic glasses. In January 1999, the American government gave Malcolm X its stamp of approval by issuing a Malcolm X postage stamp. "The full 'Americanization of Malcolm X' appeared to be complete," writes Marable.[571] Similarly, the Mexican communist artist Frida Kahlo, is probably rolling over in her grave as her face and art appear on T-Shirts, mugs, air-fresheners, and other kitsch memorabilia. She has become the model of modern feminism and her art has been robbed of her political views and

[570] Manning Marable, "Rediscovering Malcolm's Life: A Historian's Adventures in Living History," in Manning Marable and Hishaam Aidi (eds.), *Black Routes to Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 299-315, p. 301.
[571] *Ibid.,* p. 304.

commitments, much like so many of the women of the Maghreb Generation. These are the stakes. We must all at once retrieve the life-stories of the Maghreb Generation and work hard to make sure they are not immediately re-flattened by a popular consumer culture eager to sell gadgets of Sarah Maldoror or Kathleen Cleaver's image.

## List of Characters

**Mario de Andrade** (1928-1990): Angolan poet and founder of the Movimento Por la Liberação de Angola (MPLA), husband of Sarah Maldoror father of Anouchka and Henda de Andrade.

**Néjib Ayed** (1953-2019): Tunisian film critic, general secretary then president of the Federation Tunisienne des Cinés-Clubs (FTCC) from 1973 to 1988. Executive Director of the JCC in 2017 and 2018. Interviewed June 6th, 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

**Abdellatif Ben Amar** (1943-present): Tunisian Filmmaker, known for *Une si simple histoire* and *Sejnane*, amongst others. Interviewed May 30th, 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

**Tahar Ben Jelloun** (1947-present): Moroccan writer and poet, published his first poem "L'aube des dalles" in *Souffles.*

**Aquino de Bragança** (1924-1986): Goan writer and political activist. Was a leading political and intellectual figure in the fight for Mozambican independence.

**Férid Boughedir** (1944-present): Tunisian filmmaker, film critic, and cinema professor. Known for *Un été à la Goulette*, and *Halfaouine*, amongst others. Interviewed June 12th, 2018, Paris, France.

**Amilcar Cabral** (1924-1973): Militant poet from Cape-Verde and Guinea-Bissau. He was assassinated in 1973.

**Mohammed Challouf** (1957-present): Tunisian filmmaker, known for *Tahar Cheriaa: à l'ombre du baobab*. Interviewed November 6th, 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

**Tahar Cheriaa** (1927-2010): Tunisian Founder of the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage, known as the "Father of Tunisian and African film." Father of Kaiser Cheriaa.

**Eldridge Cleaver** (1935-1988): Black American writer and political activist. Headed the International Division of the Black Panther Party in Algiers. Former husband of Kathleen Cleaver.

**Kathleen Cleaver** (1945-present): Black American Law Professor, writer and political activist. Headed the International Division of the Black Panther Party in Algiers. Former wife of Eldridge Cleaver. Interviewed on September 26th, 2015, in Atlanta Georgia.

**Hassan Daldoul** (1942-present): Tunisian producer. Interviewed June 8th, 2018, Tunis, Tunisia.

**René Depestre** (1926-present)**:** Haitian poet and militant. Known for *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves.* Interviewed on December 13th, 2017, in Lézignan-Corbières, France

**Nourredine Djoudi** (1934-present): Algerian ambassador to South Africa. Interviewed on March 27th, 2018 in Algiers, Algeria.

**Jelila Hafsia** (1927-present): Tunisian journalist and director of the cultural club Tahar Haddad. Interviewed March 3rd, 2014, Tunis, Tunisia.

**Med Hondo** (1936-2019): Franco-Mauritanian actor, filmmaker and producer. Known for S*oleil O* and *Les Bicots-Nègres vos voisins*.

**Ted Joans** (1928-2003): Black American painter, beat poet, and militant. Known for *A Black Pow-Wow of Jazz Poems* (1969), and *Afrodisia* (1970).

**Abdellatif Laâbi** (1942-present): Moroccan poet, militant, and founder of *Souffles*. Husband of Jocelyne Laâbi.

**André Laude** (1936-1995): French poet and friend of Med Hondo and *Souffles.*

**Sarah Maldoror** (1938-present): Guadeloupean filmmaker (known for Monogambée and Sambizanga, amongst others), wife of Mario de Andrade, mother of Anouchka and Henda de Andrade. Interviewed on August 28th, 2018 in Saint-Denis, France.

**Toni Maraini** (1941-present): Italian writer, art historian, and sole female member of the *Souffles* team. Wife of Mohammed Melehi. Email interview on February 4th, 2018.

**Denis Martinez** (1941-present): Algerian painter, friend of Jean Sénac, and founder of the *Aouchem* painting movement. Interviewed on March 28th, 2018 in Blida, Algeria.

**Mohamed Melehi** (1936-present): Moroccan painter and designer of the *Black Sun of Victory* on the *Souffles* cover. Phone interview on January 31st, 2018.

**Elaine Mokhtefi** (1928-present): American writer and militant. Organized the American contingent of the PANAF in 1969. Published her memoir *Algiers: Third World Capital* in 2018. Interviewed September 3rd, 2018 in New York City, United States.

**Bitty Moro** (1939-2019): Actor and Theater director from the Ivory Coast. Attended the Pan-African Festival of Algiers.

**Mostafa Nissabouri** (1943-present): Moroccan poet and co-founder of *Souffles.* Interviewed on February 13th, 2018, in Casablanca, Morocco.

**Marcelino dos Santos** (1929-2020): Mozambican poet, militant and founder of the Fronte de Libertação de Mozambique (FRELIMO).

**Ousmane Sembène** (1923-2007): Senegalese writer, filmmaker, and militant. Known for La Noire de... (1966), which was the first African film exhibited at the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage.

**Jean Sénac** (1926-1973): Algerian writer and militant for Algerian independence. Creator of the militant-poetic radio show *Poésie sur tous les fronts.* Was assassinated in his apartment in August 1973.

**Abraham Serfaty** (1926-2010): Moroccan writer and opponent to King Hassan II, contributed to *Souffles* and *Anfas*.

**Archie Shepp** (1937-present): Black American saxophonist. Attended the Pan-African Festival of Algiers where he performed with poet Ted Joans and a group of Touareg musicians.

**Hocine Tandjaoui** (1949-present): Algerian writer, writer, and disenchanted youth in Boumédiène's Algeria. Interviewed on December 18th, 2017 in Paris, France.

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Marc Ollivier—Interviewed May 3rd, 2018, Paris, France.

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